The ReceptioGate Affair 2026

New Evidence on Peter Kidd, the Sotheby's Sale of Stolen Leaves from Turin MS E.V.5, and the Defamation Campaign that Followed

Jordi Puig

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INTRODUCTION

The Price of Truth in the Antiquarian Manuscript Market

What Was Peter Kidd Trying to Protect?

This book begins with a question that, remarkably, almost no journalist asked during four years of articles, blog posts, social-media discussions, and institutional proceedings.

Why did Peter Kidd devote so much time and energy to attacking Professor Carla Rossi?

The common narrative, often whispered in academic corridors, framed Kidd's relentless campaign as a bizarre, almost pathological obsession with a female scholar. That narrative is false. It completely misses the point, shifting the focus from financial crime to personal drama. Peter Kidd's actions were not the product of a sick obsession; they were a calculated, cold-blooded effort to protect massive economic interests linked to the international trafficking and fencing of stolen cultural heritage.

In July 2015, Sotheby's London offered for sale three illuminated folios illegally removed from Turin MS

E.V.5, a manuscript preserved in the Biblioteca Universitaria di Torino. The catalogue descriptions—which served to validate and commercialize these stolen goods—were prepared by Peter Kidd. Although these leaves would later be recovered by the Italian Carabinieri and returned to Turin, their appearance on the market left a paper trail.

In the very same Sotheby's sale appeared leaves from another dismembered manuscript: the Book of Hours later reconstructed by Carla Rossi and published as *The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy*. Years afterwards, when Rossi's rigorous scientific research began tracing the provenance of these fragments, exposing the networks that profit from dismantling medieval codices, she became a threat. Her academic work directly endangered a lucrative, shadowy market. Kidd's subsequent accusations of plagiarism were not a crusade for academic integrity; they were a preemptive strike designed to destroy the credibility of the whistleblower.

For more than four years, journalists focused blindly on a single, orchestrated question: had Rossi committed (self)plagiarism?

In doing so, they ignored the most scandalous side of the story. While a scholar was exposing the illicit circulation of detached leaves, high-ranking academic institutions—

specifically the University of Zurich and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)—chose to give absolute credit to a compromised figure. Instead of investigating the origin of the manuscripts or protecting one of their top researchers, these institutions fell into the trap, effectively laundering the narrative of a man deeply entangled with the antiquarian underworld.

They weaponized bureaucratic procedures against the victim, legitimizing the smoke screen of an international fencing network.

Why did the public discussion concentrate almost exclusively on the scholar who documented manuscript dismemberment, while institutions blindly validated her accuser?

Was ReceptioGate truly a story about (self)plagiarism?

Or was it the story of what happens when a researcher uncovers an international network of cultural theft, and the academic establishment chooses to back the criminal rather than face the truth?

The chapters that follow reconstruct the evidence and allow readers to decide for themselves.

In August 2022, a monograph titled *Biblioclasm & Digital Reconstruction. Eleven scattered manuscripts digitally reassembled through the Wayback Recovery Method* was

published in the scientific journal *Theory and Criticism of Literature and Arts* (Vol. 6, No. 1). The study, led by codicologist Professor Carla Rossi and the team at the RECEPTIO Research Centre, utilized digital forensic methods to reconstruct eleven medieval illuminated manuscripts that had been systematically dismembered (*biblioclasm*) and sold piecemeal on the international antiquarian market. Concurrently, detailed dossiers tracking these illicit commercial networks were submitted to the Italian Carabinieri Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale - TPC).

What followed was not an academic debate, but a violent, coordinated campaign of *character assassination*, digital stalking, and professional erasure.

The timing was precise. Immediately after the TPC received the investigative reports identifying specific dealers, auction houses, and independent consultants involved in legitimizing stolen Italian cultural heritage, a devastating smear campaign was launched against Professor Rossi. For more than three years, Professor Carla Rossi largely refrained from discussing publicly the circumstances that had led to the ReceptioGate affair. While responding to accusations through legal channels, scholarly publications, and institutional procedures, she

avoided addressing in detail the broader context surrounding the campaign.

That silence ended in 2026.

Following the emergence of new documentary evidence and the formalisation of a criminal complaint before the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC), Rossi published an article entitled *From Sotheby's to Character Assassination: The Case of Turin MS E.V.5*. The article was accompanied by a public video presentation that reconstructed the history of the Turin manuscript, the theft of its illuminated leaves, their appearance on the international antiquarian market, and the events that ultimately led to the ReceptioGate affair.

For the first time, the chronology linking manuscript theft, the international circulation of stolen leaves, auction-house cataloguing, and the subsequent campaign against a scholar was presented as a single documented narrative.

This book documents the exact anatomy of that campaign, exposing how public digital platforms, academic mailing lists, and institutional vulnerabilities were weaponized to silence a whistleblower and shield individuals and practices whose activities had come under increasing scrutiny.

The central question raised by the new evidence is straightforward. Why did the individual who catalogued the **three leaves removed from Turin MS E.V.5 for Sotheby's in 2015 become, seven years later, the principal architect of a campaign directed against the scholar who had reported the circulation of dismembered manuscripts and stolen leaves to the Italian authorities?**

The documents examined in the following pages do not merely concern a dispute between scholars. They reveal a chronology in which manuscript theft, provenance questions, auction-house practices, academic pressure, anonymous communications, online harassment, and institutional decision-making became unexpectedly intertwined.

The Turin MS E.V.5 and the Sotheby's Connection

At the center of this clash lies one of the rarest manuscripts in the world: the *De Victoria et Triumpho* by Raoul Bollart, preserved under the shelfmark **MS E.V.5** at the University Library of Turin. In 1979, three highly valuable illuminated leaves (folios 9, 11, and 20) were sliced out of this volume with a utility knife. The theft was immediately reported, and the stolen images were

published by the Carabinieri in 1982.
Decades later, those exact stolen leaves resurfaced in London at two prominent Sotheby's auctions:

- Sotheby's Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, 2 July 2013, Lots 19–21
- Sotheby's Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, 7 July 2015, Lots 49–51

The auction catalogue descriptions for these lots were drafted by **Peter Kidd**, a freelance consultant for Sotheby's specializing in medieval manuscripts. Despite extensive pre-existing scientific bibliography explicitly stating that only two copies of Bollart's text existed—the pristine Lat. 97 in Geneva and the mutilated MS E.V.5 in Turin—Kidd's catalogue entry omitted any mention of the Turin manuscript. Instead, it claimed the leaves were a "superior," newly discovered presentation copy. Crucially, as photographic evidence shows, the leaves still visibly retained their original handwritten Turin page numbers in the upper right margins at the time of sale .
The stolen miniatures were eventually seized by Interpol and the TPC in Brussels in 2018 and returned to Turin. However, when Professor Rossi's 2022 research publicly exposed the structural failures in auction house provenance checks and the role of consultants in creating

misleading *expertises*, the network retaliated.

The Anatomy of a Smear Campaign

Beginning on December 24, 2022—just days after an unencrypted academic mailing list leaked the news of Professor Rossi's cooperation with law enforcement—Peter Kidd launched an aggressive online offensive via his personal blog (*blogspot.com*) and Twitter (now X). He shifted public focus entirely away from the stolen art traffic by fabricating a narrative of systemic "plagiarism" against Rossi's unrelated work on the *Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy*.

The operation escalated into severe psychological and professional persecution:

- **Academic Sabotage**: Coordinated, anonymous emails using spoofed identities were flooded into the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), university rectorates, colleagues, and students to freeze research funding and destroy professional ties.
- **Stalking and Intimidation**: Papparazzi-style photos of Professor Rossi's private residence in Lugano were taken and published online. Pression tactics were applied by figures linked to the

antiquarian trade, including retired University of Zurich professor **Gaudenz Freuler**—who had previously authenticated a stolen Castelfiorentino leaf sold at Koller Auktionen (pp. 2, 5, 8, 43). Freuler explicitly warned Rossi via email to "not seek legal assistance" and that unless she apologized to Kidd, her "career was finished".

- **Digital Violence**: In January 2023, anonymous actors generated and linked fake online obituaries announcing Professor Rossi's suicide "out of shame," weaponizing Wikipedia to cement the lie. Legal counsel representing Rossi withdrew after receiving direct, anonymous threats to their safety and their children.

The 2026 Turning Point

For years, institutional cowardice allowed this digital lynch mob to dictate the narrative, forcing Professor Rossi to resign from her position at the University of Zurich due to a total lack of institutional protection.

The definitive turning point arrived on **January 7, 2026**. The Swiss Federal Administrative Court issued a

landmark ruling that thoroughly dismantled the central pillars of the smear campaign, officially clearing Professor Rossi of the plagiarism allegations and overturning the retaliatory suspension of her research funds. Furthermore, in 2026, a comprehensive criminal complaint was formalized at the Sezione Cyber Investigation of the Carabinieri TPC in Rome, mapping out the digital infrastructure, false identities, and direct links between the actors of the defamation campaign and the antiquarian trade.

The ReceptioGate Affair 2026 is more than the chronicle of a high-stakes academic feud. It is a meticulous, evidence-backed exposé of an industry's willingness to deploy absolute digital violence to silence structural critique, and a testament to the heavy price scholars pay for defending the integrity of global cultural heritage.

CHAPTER 1

The Disappearance of Turin MS E.V.5: Codicological History and the 1979 Theft

To understand the origins of the events that would eventually culminate in the ReceptioGate affair, it is necessary to begin with the manuscript at the centre of the story: Turin MS E.V.5, preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino.

This remarkable codex is one of the most important surviving witnesses to the literary and artistic culture of the French court during the reign of Louis XII. Produced in the early years of the sixteenth century, it contains two works by Raoul Bollart, Seigneur de Champceuil: *De Victoria et Triumpho Francorum Regis Ludovici Huiusce Nominis Duodecimi*, celebrating the French victory at Agnadello in 1509, and *Otium Litterarium: Regni Pauperis Legatio ad Unumquenque Divitem*.

The textual tradition of these works is exceptionally limited. **Only two manuscript witnesses are currently known**. The first is Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, MS Lat. 97, generally regarded as the author's working copy.

The second is Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, MS E.V.5, an illuminated presentation manuscript produced for the French royal court and attributed to Jean Pichore or to artists working within his immediate circle.

Because only two witnesses survive, the identification of individual leaves is unusually straightforward. Any detached folio containing Bollart's text, copied in the same format and accompanied by illumination attributable to the Pichore workshop, can be associated with one of these two manuscripts. Since the Geneva manuscript remains complete, any detached illuminated leaf necessarily derives from the Turin codex.

In 1979, three illuminated leaves were removed from MS E.V.5. The missing folios contained some of the manuscript's most important miniatures and represented an irreplaceable loss for the integrity of the volume. The theft was promptly reported by the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino, and a formal investigation was opened.

The three missing leaves were:

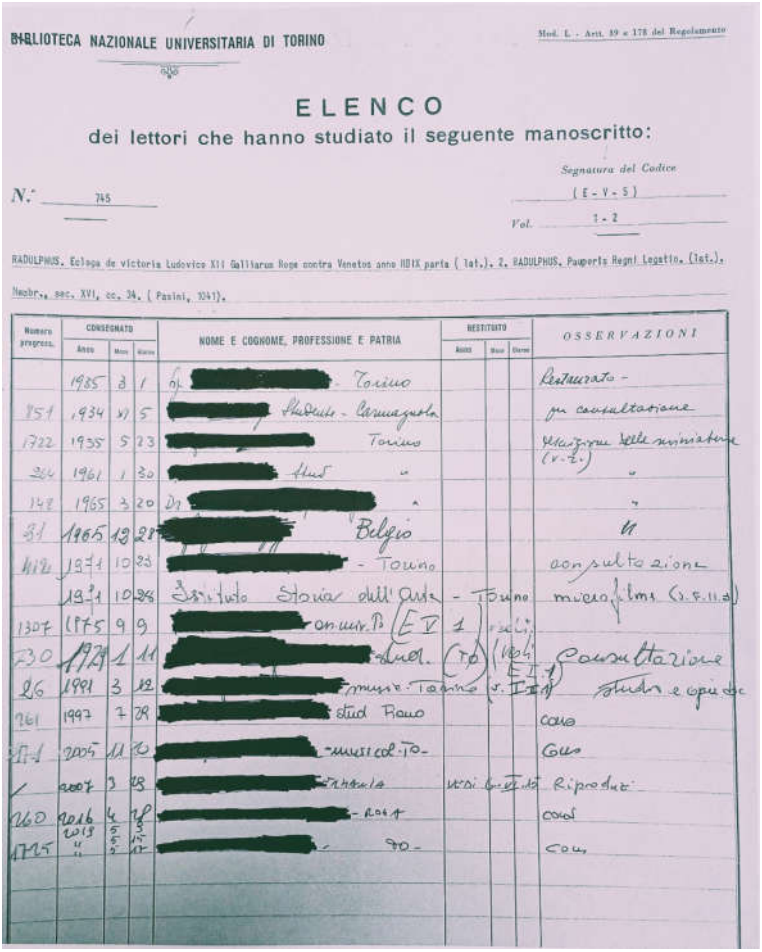
- Folio 9v, illustrating the capture of Venetian banners by the armies of Louis XII;

- Folio 11r, depicting the Adoration of the Shepherds;
- Folio 20v, illustrating the address of the poor envoy to the rich.

The case received immediate attention from the Italian authorities. Detailed descriptions of the missing leaves were prepared by the library, including the text transmitted, the layout of the page, and the iconographic characteristics of the miniatures.
In 1982, the three leaves were included in the *Bollettino delle opere d'arte trafugate* published by the Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale (TPC).

Their images and descriptions were subsequently circulated through international law-enforcement channels, making their illicit provenance known to institutions, museums, auction houses and manuscript specialists.

Despite these measures, the leaves disappeared from public view for more than three decades.



BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE UNIVERSITARIA DI TORINO

Mod. L - Artt. 89 e 178 del Regolamento

ELENCO

dei lettori che hanno studiato il seguente manoscritto:

N.° 745

Segnatura del Codice (E - V - 5)

Vol. 1 - 2

RADULPHUS. Eclogae de victoria Ludovico XII Gallicarum Rege contra Venetos anno MDIX parta (lat.). 2. RADULPHUS. Pauperis Regni Legatio. (lat.).

Membr., sec. XVI, cc. 34. (Pasini, 1041).

Numero progress.	CONSEGNATO Anno	Mese	Giorno	NOME E COGNOME, PROFESSIONE E PATRIA	RESTITUITO Anno	Mese	Giorno	OSSERVAZIONI
	1985	3	1	[redacted] Torino				Restituito -
851	1934	11	5	[redacted] Modena - Carmagnola				per consultazione
1722	1935	5	23	[redacted] Torino				Riunione delle miniature (V-2.)
264	1961	1	30	[redacted] stud "				"
148	1965	3	20	[redacted] "				"
81	1965	12	28	[redacted] Belgio				"
1112	1971	10	23	[redacted] - Torino				consultazione
	1971	10	28	Istituto Storia dell'Arte - Torino				microfilms (V.E.11.a)
1307	1975	9	9	[redacted] com.le (E V 1)				
230	1979	1	11	[redacted] stud. (TO) (1984 E V 1)				Consultazione
26	1991	3	12	[redacted] musicol. Torino (E V 1)				studio e copia doc
961	1997	7	29	[redacted] stud Roma				cons
1-1	2005	11	10	[redacted] -musicol.-TO-				Cons
/	2007	3	28	[redacted] Firenze				Riprodut.
1260	2016	4	19	[redacted] - Roma				cons
1725	2019	5	31	[redacted] - TO -				cons.
	"	5	17					

1. Consultation register of Turin MS E.V.5 held by the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. The register records the final consultation of the manuscript before the theft of the three illuminated leaves later recovered by the Italian Carabinieri TPC. Reproduced from Carla Rossi, *From Sotheby's to Character Assassination: The Case of Turin MS E.V.5* (2026).

2. Fol. 9 of MS E.V.5, cut from BU-TO in 1979, corresponding to lot 49 in the London sale of 7 July 2015. Link to the description in the 2015 Sotheby's catalogue prepared by Peter Kidd: https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts-l15240/lot.49.html

3. Fol. 11 of MS E.V.5, corresponding to lot 50 in the London sale of 7 July 2015. Link to the description in the 2015 Sotheby's catalogue prepared by Peter Kidd: https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts-l15240/lot.50.html

4. Fol. 20 of MS E.V.5, corresponding to lot 51 in the London sale of 7 July 2015. Link to the description in the 2015 Sotheby's catalogue prepared by Peter Kidd: https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts-l15240/lot.51.html

SPECIALIST AND AUCTION ENQUIRIES

For further information on lots in this auction please contact the specialist listed below.

Dr. Mara Hofmann
Senior Specialist
+44 (0)20 7293 5330
mara.hofmann@sothebys.com

Peter Kidd
Consultant to Sotheby's

SALE NUMBER
L15420 "ANGELS"

BIDS DEPARTMENT
+44 (0)20 7293 5283
FAX +44 (0)20 7293 6255
bids.london@sothebys.com

Telephone bid requests should be received 24 hours prior to the sale.

PRIVATE CLIENT GROUP
+44 (0)20 7293 6429
privateclients@sothebys.com
EUROPE
Alexandra Brenninkmeijer
alexandra.brenninkmeijer@sothebys.com

5. Sotheby's catalogue (*Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, London, 7 July 2015, Sale L15420 "Angels"), identifying Peter Kidd as "Consultant to Sotheby's". The auction included both the three folios removed from Turin MS E.V.5 and leaves from the manuscript later reconstructed as *The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy*, two cases that would subsequently become central to the ReceptioGate affair.

Yet the leaves retained a crucial identifying feature. The original handwritten foliation associated with the Turin manuscript remained clearly visible in the upper margins. These numbers constituted a direct material

link between the detached leaves and their parent manuscript. Their continued visibility would later prove significant when the leaves resurfaced on the international antiquarian market.

The disappearance of the three leaves from Turin MS E.V.5 was far from an isolated event. During the final decades of the twentieth century, numerous Italian libraries, archives and ecclesiastical institutions suffered losses involving illuminated manuscripts and choir books. In many cases, the objective was not the theft of complete volumes but the extraction of individual illuminated leaves capable of being sold separately as works of art. This practice, commonly described as biblioclasm, transformed unique historical artefacts into a series of commercially valuable objects while permanently destroying the integrity of the original manuscripts.

The story of Turin MS E.V.5 would remain dormant for many years. When the missing leaves eventually reappeared in London, however, they would reveal much more than the fate of three stolen miniatures.

They would expose a chain of events linking manuscript theft, the international antiquarian market, auction-

house cataloguing, and, ultimately, one of the most controversial episodes in recent manuscript studies.

CHAPTER 2

The Reappearance of the Stolen Leaves

Thirty-Four Years of Silence

For more than three decades after the 1979 theft, the three illuminated leaves removed from Turin MS E.V.5 disappeared from public view. Their images remained preserved in the records of the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and in the documentation produced by the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino. No public trace of the leaves appeared in the scholarly literature, museum collections, or exhibition catalogues.

Yet the leaves had not vanished completely. At some point they entered the international antiquarian market, where detached manuscript leaves are frequently traded as autonomous works of art. Their reappearance would occur in London, through one of the most prestigious auction houses in the world.

Sotheby's, London, 2 July 2013

On 2 July 2013, Sotheby's offered three illuminated leaves attributed to a manuscript containing works by Raoul Bollart in its sale *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts* (lots 19–21).

The appearance of these leaves was remarkable for several reasons.

The texts copied on the leaves belonged to *De Victoria et Triumpho Francorum Regis Ludovici XII* and *Regni Pauperis Legatio ad Unumquemque Divitem*, two works whose manuscript transmission is exceptionally limited. Scholarly bibliography available before the sale consistently identified only two surviving witnesses: Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, MS Lat. 97, and Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria, MS E.V.5.

Because the Geneva manuscript remained complete, the existence of detached illuminated leaves immediately raised important questions regarding their origin.

The leaves remained unsold.

Sotheby's, London, 7 July 2015

Two years later, the same three leaves reappeared in a second Sotheby's sale, again in London, in the auction

Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts of 7 July 2015 (lots 49–51).

The catalogue descriptions correctly identified the texts, their author Raoul Bollart, the political context of the French campaigns against Venice, and the artistic milieu associated with the manuscript's production.

The catalogue further suggested that the leaves represented evidence for a second manuscript witness distinct from the Geneva codex and described them as deriving from a superior presentation copy.

This interpretation raises important questions.

Long before the 2015 auction, specialist bibliography had already identified the Turin manuscript as the second witness transmitting Bollart's texts. The existence of Turin MS E.V.5 was therefore well established within the scholarly literature.

The Evidence Visible in the Photographs

The auction photographs contain another striking feature.

As shown by the images published by Sotheby's, the leaves still preserved the original handwritten foliation

associated with the Turin manuscript. The numbers remained visible in the upper right margins of the leaves at the time of sale.

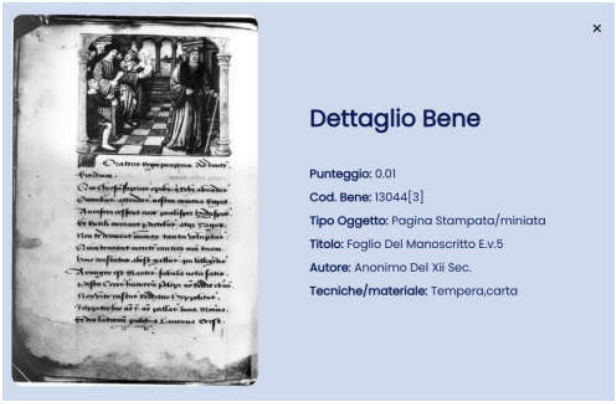
Figures 2–4 reproduce the comparison between the photographs published by the Italian authorities after the theft and the images appearing in the Sotheby's catalogue.

https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts-l15240/lot.49.html

Folio 9v of Turin MS E.V.5: comparison between the photograph published in the *Bollettino delle opere d'arte trafugate* and the Sotheby's catalogue image.

https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts-l15240/lot.50.html

Folio 11r of Turin MS E.V.5: comparison between the TPC documentation and the Sotheby's catalogue photograph.



https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2015/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts-l15240.html?p=5

Folio 20v of Turin MS E.V.5: comparison between the TPC documentation and the Sotheby's catalogue photograph.

Questions Raised by the 2015 Catalogue

The purpose of this volume is not to determine criminal

responsibility, which belongs exclusively to the competent judicial authorities.

The documentary record nevertheless raises several questions.

What provenance investigations were conducted before the leaves were offered for sale in 2013 and 2015?

What information concerning Turin MS E.V.5 was available to the specialists responsible for describing the material?

How did leaves removed from a manuscript reported stolen in 1979 enter the international antiquarian market and remain there for decades?

These questions became even more significant after the recovery of the leaves by the Italian Carabinieri TPC and Interpol in 2018. Their return demonstrated that the leaves offered at Sotheby's were indeed the folios removed from Turin MS E.V.5.

The answers to these questions would acquire an unexpected relevance several years later, when one of the individuals involved in the description of the leaves emerged as the principal public accuser of the scholar who had reported the circulation of dismembered manuscripts and stolen leaves to the Italian authorities.

CHAPTER 3

Peter Kidd, the Sotheby's Catalogues, and the Questions They Raised

The 2015 Sotheby's sale occupies a central place in the present investigation because it represents the last documented commercial appearance of the three leaves removed from Turin MS E.V.5 before their recovery by the Italian authorities.

The catalogue descriptions accompanying lots 49–51 were not anonymous texts. They were prepared by Peter Kidd, a manuscript specialist who had collaborated with Sotheby's for many years and whose name was already well known among manuscript dealers, collectors and scholars. According to information subsequently provided by Sotheby's itself, Peter Kidd was responsible for the 2015 sale and its catalogue.

The descriptions demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the manuscript material.

The author correctly identified Raoul Bollart, recognized the political and literary context of the texts, connected them to the French campaigns against Venice, and

situated the manuscript within the artistic milieu associated with Jean Pichore and early sixteenth-century Parisian illumination.
The issue is therefore not one of competence.
On the contrary, the catalogue entries reveal considerable expertise.
The question concerns the conclusions drawn from that expertise.
The catalogue stated:

"*The Geneva manuscript was previously thought to be unique: the present leaves are the only evidence that a second copy existed; presumably one copy was made for the author and another was a presentation copy for the King.*"

The description further suggested that the leaves represented a superior royal presentation copy.
Yet by 2015 the existence of the Turin manuscript was already well established in specialist literature.
Scholars working on Bollart's texts had long recognized two surviving witnesses: Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, MS Lat. 97, and Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale

Universitaria, MS E.V.5. The Turin manuscript was not an unknown object. It had been catalogued, described and discussed in scholarly publications. More importantly, the removal of three illuminated leaves from the manuscript in 1979 had been officially reported and documented.

The photographs published in the Sotheby's catalogue introduce an additional element.

The leaves still preserved their original handwritten foliation.

The numbers visible in the upper margins corresponded to the foliation of the Turin manuscript. Far from concealing their origin, the leaves continued to bear physical traces linking them directly to MS E.V.5.

The significance of these details extends beyond the individual case.

The international market for detached manuscript leaves depends heavily upon catalogue descriptions, provenance statements and scholarly expertise. Collectors, dealers and institutions frequently rely upon such information when evaluating the legitimacy and historical significance of the material offered for sale.

Consequently, the manner in which provenance is

described—or omitted—can substantially influence the understanding of an object's history.

For this reason, the present volume does not seek to determine criminal liability. That task belongs to judicial authorities.

The historical question is different.

How was it possible for leaves removed from a manuscript reported stolen in 1979 to be presented on the international market as evidence of a newly identified manuscript witness?

What information concerning Turin MS E.V.5 was available to those responsible for the catalogue?

What provenance checks were undertaken before the material was offered for sale?

These questions acquired renewed importance in 2018, when the leaves were recovered through the combined efforts of Interpol and the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and were returned to Turin. Their recovery confirmed that the leaves circulating on the market were indeed those removed from MS E.V.5 decades earlier.

For several years, however, the affair remained largely confined to the history of a stolen manuscript.

Only in 2022 did it become connected to a much broader controversy.

That year, Professor Carla Rossi submitted to the Italian Carabinieri TPC a series of reports concerning the dismantling of medieval manuscripts and the circulation of detached leaves on the international market. Among the individuals identified in those reports was Peter Kidd. Within days of the public disclosure of those activities, an unprecedented campaign targeting Rossi and the RECEPTIO Research Centre began to unfold.

CHAPTER 4

Reporting the Manuscript Trade: The 2022 TPC Dossiers

The recovery of the three leaves from Turin MS E.V.5 in 2018 did not bring an end to the broader questions raised by their appearance on the international antiquarian market. Their return demonstrated that cultural objects reported stolen decades earlier could still circulate through major commercial channels before being identified and recovered. The case also highlighted a wider phenomenon: the systematic dismantling of medieval manuscripts and the dispersal of their leaves among dealers, collectors, and auction houses.

For Professor Carla Rossi, the Turin manuscript was only one among numerous cases documented during a long-term research project devoted to manuscript dismemberment and digital reconstruction. Since 2006, Rossi had been collecting evidence relating to the destruction of medieval codices, the separation of illuminated leaves from their parent volumes, and the subsequent circulation of those leaves on the

international market.

The results of this work culminated in a large-scale research programme dedicated to the reconstruction of dismembered manuscripts. Through the use of digital archives, historical catalogues, auction records, and image comparison, Rossi and her collaborators reconstructed the histories of numerous manuscripts whose leaves had been dispersed across collections and countries.

The project was not limited to scholarly reconstruction.

As the documentation accumulated, recurrent patterns began to emerge. The same dealers, consultants, auction houses, collectors, and intermediaries frequently appeared in the provenance histories of detached leaves originating from manuscripts that had been mutilated, dispersed, or, in some cases, reported stolen.

By 2022, Rossi had assembled a substantial body of documentation concerning these activities.

In August of that year, the journal *Theory and Criticism of Literature and Arts* published the volume *Biblioclasm & Digital Reconstruction: Eleven Scattered Manuscripts Digitally Reassembled through the Wayback Recovery Method*. The publication presented the reconstruction of

eleven medieval manuscripts whose leaves had been dispersed through the antiquarian market.

At approximately the same time, Rossi submitted a series of reports to the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC). The dossiers focused on manuscript dismemberment, detached leaves circulating on the market, provenance issues, and cases involving cultural objects of Italian origin.

Among the cases documented in these reports were the three leaves removed from Turin MS E.V.5 and subsequently offered for sale at Sotheby's.

The reports also addressed other Italian manuscripts affected by similar practices. These included leaves removed from choir books, books of hours, liturgical manuscripts, and other codices whose integrity had been permanently compromised by the extraction of illuminated pages for commercial purposes.

The significance of these reports extended beyond individual objects.

They proposed that manuscript dismemberment should not be viewed as a series of isolated incidents. Rather, the evidence suggested the existence of a persistent commercial ecosystem in which detached leaves were

transformed into highly desirable art objects while the destruction of the original manuscripts remained largely invisible.

The reports further identified specific actors whose names repeatedly appeared in connection with such material.

Among them was Peter Kidd.

At the time, Kidd was widely known through his blog *Medieval Manuscripts Provenance*, which had become an reference point for collectors, dealers, manuscript scholars, and auction houses. His earlier work as a cataloguer and consultant had given him extensive familiarity with the manuscript market and with the provenance histories of numerous codices and detached leaves.

The inclusion of Kidd's name in the reports did not concern social media activity, academic disagreements, or personal disputes.

It concerned his documented role in the description and circulation of manuscript material that had subsequently become the subject of provenance investigations, including the leaves removed from Turin MS E.V.5.

The chronology that followed is striking.

On 20 December 2022, Rossi published an article discussing manuscript dismemberment and referring publicly to the reports that had been submitted to the Italian authorities. The article called attention to the continuing circulation of detached manuscript leaves and to the need for greater scrutiny of provenance claims within the antiquarian market.

Within days, a series of events began to unfold.

Information concerning Rossi's cooperation with law-enforcement authorities circulated through academic mailing lists. Messages relating to her research activities were distributed among scholars and institutions. Shortly thereafter, Peter Kidd initiated a sequence of blog posts and social-media interventions directed against Rossi and the RECEPTIO Research Centre.

The focus of public discussion shifted rapidly.

Questions concerning manuscript theft, provenance, and the antiquarian trade gave way to accusations concerning plagiarism, academic misconduct, institutional legitimacy, and personal credibility.

The transformation was remarkable.

A debate that had originated in the documentation of

manuscript dismemberment and the circulation of detached leaves was gradually reframed as a controversy concerning the scholar who had assembled the evidence.
This shift marked the beginning of what would later become known as the ReceptioGate affair.
The next chapter reconstructs the chronology of those events, beginning with the publication of Rossi's article in December 2022 and the first public interventions launched in response. It examines how a dispute initially centred on manuscript provenance evolved into one of the most extensive campaigns of academic harassment documented in the field of manuscript studies.

CHAPTER 5

Who profits, who legitimises, who loses

The Receptio affair reveals how economic interests, academic authority, and institutional inertia can converge when scholarly research threatens established networks and long-standing practices. The events examined in the preceding chapters suggest that the controversy surrounding RECEPTIO did not emerge from methodological flaws or scholarly misconduct. Rather, it followed the public exposure of activities connected with the dismantling of medieval manuscripts, the circulation of detached leaves, and the weaknesses of provenance controls within the international antiquarian market.

RECEPTIO was established as a research centre devoted to the digital reconstruction of dismembered manuscripts and to the study of biblioclasm as a historical and contemporary phenomenon. Through digital philology, archival research, and the systematic analysis of auction records, the centre sought to reconstruct manuscripts that had been physically destroyed and dispersed. The publication of these reconstructions, together with the submission of

documentation to the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, placed the centre in direct opposition to interests that benefited from the continued circulation of detached leaves.

The question raised by the ReceptioGate affair is therefore not simply who profited from the sale of manuscript material. It is also who contributed to its legitimisation.

The antiquarian market relies upon a complex ecosystem. Dealers, collectors, auction houses, consultants, cataloguers, and academic specialists each perform distinct functions. Detached leaves rarely circulate without descriptions, attributions, provenance narratives, or expert assessments capable of reassuring potential buyers. Scholarly authority thus becomes an integral part of the commercial process. The value of an object depends not only upon its artistic quality but also upon the credibility conferred by recognised experts.

Several figures appearing in the documentation examined in this volume occupied precisely such intermediary positions between scholarship and the market.

Among them was Peter Kidd, whose catalogue descriptions accompanied the three leaves removed from Turin MS E.V.5 when they appeared at Sotheby's in 2015. Years later, Kidd became the principal public

accuser of the scholar who had documented the circulation of detached manuscript leaves and reported related concerns to the Italian authorities. The coincidence raises questions that remain central to understanding the chronology of the affair.

Another important figure was Gaudenz Freuler, an art historian and manuscript specialist whose expertise had been used in connection with manuscript leaves later identified as stolen cultural property. Documentation submitted to the Italian authorities in 2026 also records a series of communications between Freuler and Rossi following the submission of reports concerning manuscript trafficking. According to these records, Freuler repeatedly sought information concerning the complaints submitted to the Carabinieri TPC and attempted to persuade Rossi not to pursue further legal action. In one exchange, he warned her that unless she apologised to Peter Kidd her academic career would be finished. Such statements acquire particular significance when viewed against the events that followed.

The campaign itself extended far beyond ordinary academic disagreement.

Beginning in late December 2022, Rossi became the target of an escalating series of attacks. Blog posts, social-media interventions, anonymous emails, and

coordinated communications sought to redirect public attention away from the questions raised by manuscript provenance and toward allegations concerning plagiarism and academic misconduct. The accusations rapidly spread through academic networks, funding bodies, university administrators, colleagues, students, and professional associations.

Anonymous messages were sent to the Swiss National Science Foundation, university authorities, collaborators, conference organisers, and publishers. Several communications employed false identities or concealed their origin. At the same time, private information concerning Rossi's residence and personal life was circulated online. Photographs of her home appeared on the internet, while false narratives concerning her professional activities multiplied across blogs, websites, and social-media platforms.

The campaign reached an especially disturbing stage in January 2023, when fabricated online obituaries announced Rossi's alleged suicide. These notices were subsequently linked to manipulated information on Wikipedia and other digital platforms. The objective was not criticism of research. It was the destruction of personal credibility through humiliation, isolation, and psychological pressure.

The consequences were severe. Professional relationships deteriorated. Research collaborations became difficult to maintain. Funding decisions were influenced by allegations circulating online. Legal representatives received threats. Colleagues often preferred silence to involvement. Institutions that possessed the means to verify the facts frequently relied instead on narratives already circulating in digital spaces.

The beneficiaries of such campaigns are not always easy to identify.

Commercial actors benefit when attention is diverted from questions of provenance. Academic rivals may benefit from the marginalisation of a competitor. Institutions may benefit from avoiding controversy. Each participant can claim only a limited role, while the cumulative effect becomes devastating.

The principal losers are easier to identify.

The first victims are scholars whose research challenges powerful interests. The second are the institutions entrusted with protecting cultural heritage. The third are the manuscripts themselves, whose histories become obscured beneath layers of commercial, academic, and reputational interests.

The ReceptioGate affair demonstrates that manuscript theft and manuscript dismemberment cannot be

understood solely as problems of cultural heritage. They also generate conflicts over authority, expertise, and narrative control. Once research begins to expose those mechanisms, the debate often shifts away from the objects under investigation and toward the individual who assembled the evidence.

That transformation lies at the heart of the events documented in this volume.

CHAPTER 6

The Campaign Begins: December 2022

On 20 December 2022, Professor Carla Rossi published an article on *AboutArt* drawing attention to the circulation of detached medieval manuscript leaves on the international market and referring to documentation that had been submitted to the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC). The article did not discuss personal disputes, academic rivalries, or institutional conflicts. Its focus was manuscript dismemberment, cultural heritage protection, and the need for greater scrutiny of provenance claims concerning medieval manuscripts and illuminated leaves.

The reaction was immediate.

Within forty-eight hours, information concerning the article began circulating through academic networks. Emails discussing Rossi's activities were distributed through mailing lists associated with manuscript studies and art history. Several recipients later reported receiving messages presenting Rossi's work in a misleading and defamatory manner. The dissemination was facilitated by the use of mailing lists whose membership included

scholars, curators, librarians, conservators, collectors, and manuscript specialists throughout Europe and North America.

At almost the same moment, Peter Kidd published the first in a long series of blog posts directed against Rossi and the RECEPTIO Research Centre.

For years, the reports submitted to the Italian authorities had attracted little public attention. The publication of the AboutArt article transformed a largely confidential matter into a public discussion. From that point onwards, the focus of debate rapidly shifted. Questions concerning manuscript provenance, detached leaves, and the antiquarian market receded into the background. In their place emerged allegations concerning plagiarism, academic misconduct, institutional legitimacy, and personal credibility.

The first interventions concentrated on Rossi's work on the *Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy*, a manuscript she had digitally reconstructed from leaves dispersed on the market. Instead of addressing the substance of her research concerning manuscript dismemberment, critics increasingly focused on accusations relating to terminology, cataloguing practices, and alleged similarities with pre-existing descriptions.

The volume and intensity of the attacks soon exceeded

the boundaries of normal academic disagreement.

Anonymous emails began to circulate among colleagues, students, collaborators, publishers, and research institutions. Messages were sent to university administrators, funding agencies, and scholarly organisations. Several communications employed false identities or concealed their authorship. Others reproduced allegations already circulating online while presenting them as independently verified facts.

The effect was cumulative.

Every new accusation generated additional correspondence, new blog posts, further social-media discussions, and renewed institutional pressure. The distinction between documented evidence and online speculation became increasingly blurred.

Among the individuals repeatedly appearing in the documentation was **Gaudenz Freuler**.

A specialist in manuscript illumination and a figure active within the international manuscript market, Freuler had previously provided expertise concerning manuscript material later identified as stolen cultural property. Following the submission of reports to the Italian authorities, Freuler repeatedly contacted Rossi concerning the documentation and the possibility of legal action. According to emails preserved by Rossi, he sought

information about the reports submitted to the Carabinieri TPC and attempted to discourage further legal initiatives.

Particularly significant are communications in which Freuler warned Rossi against pursuing legal remedies and suggested that unless she apologised to Peter Kidd her academic career would effectively be over. Whether intended as advice, warning, or pressure, such statements acquired a different meaning in light of the events that followed.

The campaign gradually moved beyond professional criticism.

In early 2023, photographs of Rossi's private residence in Lugano appeared online. Personal information was circulated through websites and social-media channels. Anonymous messages targeted members of her family as well as professional collaborators. Lawyers representing Rossi reported receiving threatening communications. Several individuals involved in her defence withdrew from public involvement after becoming the target of intimidation.

The most disturbing episode occurred in January 2023.

Anonymous actors created and disseminated false online obituaries announcing Rossi's alleged suicide. These notices were subsequently amplified through digital

platforms and linked to manipulated information appearing elsewhere on the internet. The objective was no longer to challenge a scholarly argument. It was to destroy a person's reputation through humiliation, isolation, and psychological pressure.

The cumulative impact of these actions was profound.

Research collaborations were interrupted. Invitations were withdrawn. Colleagues became reluctant to associate publicly with Rossi. Funding decisions were influenced by allegations whose factual basis had not yet been independently verified. In several instances, institutions reacted to accusations circulating online before examining the documentary evidence available.

At the centre of this process stood a remarkable paradox.

The controversy had begun with questions concerning manuscript provenance, stolen leaves, and the antiquarian market. Yet within a matter of weeks public attention had been redirected almost entirely towards the individual who had assembled the evidence.

The manuscripts disappeared from the discussion.

The scholar became the story.

This transformation marks the true beginning of what would later become known as the ReceptioGate affair.

Among the most troubling episodes documented during the affair was the circulation of a series of anonymous

defamatory emails sent to numerous members of the Società Internazionale di Storia della Miniatura between December 2022 and April 2023.

The messages were distributed using contact information that appears to have originated from Society mailing lists. Because several communications sent by Society officers had included recipients in visible copy rather than blind copy, email addresses were accessible to all recipients and could easily be harvested by anyone receiving the messages.

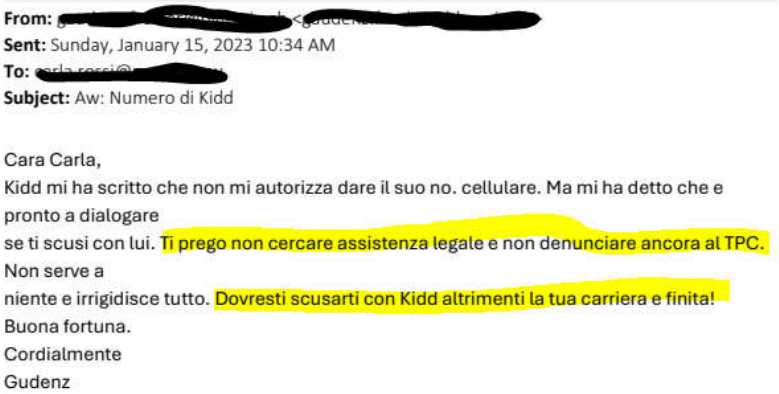
The anonymous emails adopted a distinctive style. Written in imperfect Italian, they combined personal attacks, factual inaccuracies, and repeated allegations against Professor Rossi and the RECEPTIO Research Centre. Their objective was clearly reputational rather than scholarly.

To date, the identity of the author has not been publicly established. Nevertheless, the linguistic characteristics of the messages, their subject matter, and their detailed familiarity with the individuals involved have raised questions regarding possible links with persons active within the same professional environment in which the campaign developed.

The emails formed part of a broader pattern that included blog posts, social-media interventions,

anonymous communications, and, eventually, fabricated online obituaries announcing Rossi's alleged death. Taken together, these actions contributed to an atmosphere of intimidation that extended far beyond the normal boundaries of academic disagreement.

The publication of a false obituary represents a qualitative escalation. The objective is no longer the criticism of a scholar's work or reputation. It symbolically removes the individual from public life by presenting them as deceased. In digital environments, such practices are particularly harmful because archived copies may survive long after the original publication has been removed.



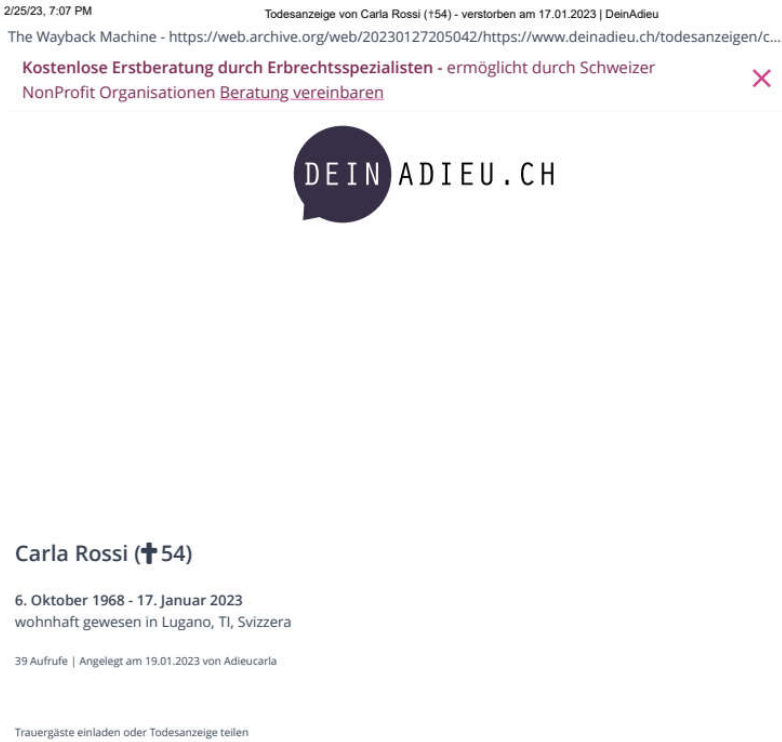
From: [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, January 15, 2023 10:34 AM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Aw: Numero di Kidd

Cara Carla,
Kidd mi ha scritto che non mi autorizza dare il suo no. cellulare. Ma mi ha detto che e pronto a dialogare
se ti scusi con lui. Ti prego non cercare assistenza legale e non denunciare ancora al TPC. Non serve a
niente e irrigidisce tutto. Dovresti scusarti con Kidd altrimenti la tua carriera e finita!
Buona fortuna.
Cordialmente
Gudenz

Da: [redacted] <gaudenz.freuler[redacted]>
Inviato: giovedì, 12 gennaio 2023 13:06
A: carla.rossi@[redacted]
Oggetto: Re: R: Convegno di Frammentologia

Cara Carla (Rossi),
grazie per il ultimissimo mail. Il suo penultimo mail fu forse creato automaticamente. Quindi non sono
idignato , e sono contento delle Sue elucidazioni. Credevo che il tutto fosse stato una cosa simila
di "faciloneria" (LOL) . Sebbene conosco Kidd da vari anni anch ' io non sapevo nemmeno del Suo Blogg fino
a tre anni fa.... Malgrado tutto rimane un pozzo d' oro.
Credo sarebbe una idea buona di vederci e darmi la denuncia al TPC, se posso aiutare a calmare le acque
in modo pacifico sono a disposizione.
con tanta cordialità
Gaudenz (Freuler)

Email correspondence between Gaudenz Freuler and Carla Rossi concerning the reports submitted to the Carabinieri TPC.


2/25/23, 7:07 PM
Todesanzeige von Carla Rossi (†54) - verstorben am 17.01.2023 | DeinAdieu
The Wayback Machine - https://web.archive.org/web/20230127205042/https://www.deinadieu.ch/todesanzeigen/c...
Kostenlose Erstberatung durch Erbrechtsspezialisten - ermöglicht durch Schweizer NonProfit Organisationen Beratung vereinbaren
DEIN ADIEU.CH
Carla Rossi (✝54)
6. Oktober 1968 - 17. Januar 2023
wohnhaft gewesen in Lugano, TI, Svizzera
39 Aufrufe | Angelegt am 19.01.2023 von Adieucarla
Trauergäste einladen oder Todesanzeige teilen

Archived copy of a fabricated online obituary published on DeinAdieu.ch in January 2023 falsely announcing the death of Professor Carla Rossi. The page, preserved by the Internet Archive, demonstrates that the false death notice was publicly accessible and indexed online during the height of the ReceptioGate campaign.

From: Sandra Perriccioli <[redacted]>
Sent: Saturday, April 1, 2023 8:29 PM
To: Carla Rossi <carla.rossi@[redacted]>
Subject:

Eccola, ma cerca di distaccarti, per quanto possibile, prima o poi finirà.
Buona serata, a.
Da: **RECEPTIO** <ReceptioLugano@proton.me>
Date: sab 1 apr 2023 alle ore 13:14
Subject: Società internazionale di Storia della Miniatura: Carla Rossi
To:

Per chi non lo sapesse, Carla Rossi è stata smascherata come plagio su vasta scala: ci sono state indagini attente e approfondite da parte di un'organizzazione di fact-checking olandese e di diversi giornali.

Diversi rispettati accademici hanno denunciato pubblicamente il suo comportamento, che abbraccia almeno gli ultimi 10 anni.

Rossi ha tentato di bloccare le critiche utilizzando almeno tre diversi studi legali per lanciare minacce ad almeno tre giornalisti e cinque accademici.

Ecco alcuni link:

Tedesco:
https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/ploetzlich-heisst-es-sie-sei-tot-880980438270

https://www.blick.ch/schweiz/plagiats-affaere-weitet-sich-aus-zuercher-professorin-schrieb-ganze-passagen-ab-id18330209.html

Inglese:
https://mssprovenance.blogspot.com/2023/02/receptiogate-recent-news.html

https://mssprovenance.blogspot.com/2023/01/the-receptio-rossi-affair-part-viii.html

Olandese:
https://nieuwscheckers.nl/receptiogate-ook-boek-over-jodenvervolging-bevat-knip-en-plakwerk-zonder-bron/

Anonymous defamatory email circulated on 1 April 2023 among members of the manuscript-studies community. Sent from a ProtonMail account using the subject line "Società internazionale di Storia della Miniatura: Carla Rossi", the message reproduced allegations already circulating on blogs and social media and directed recipients to a selected group of hostile publications. The

email illustrates how defamatory narratives were disseminated through academic networks while concealing the identity of the author.

CHAPTER 7

The Castelfiorentino Leaf

The case of Turin MS E.V.5 was not the only instance in which a manuscript leaf removed from an Italian codex resurfaced on the international art market after years of disappearance.

Among the cases documented in the reports submitted to the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC), one deserves particular attention because it introduces a second figure who would later play a significant role in the events surrounding the ReceptioGate affair: the art historian and manuscript specialist F.G. The manuscript in question was Antiphonary D from the Collegiata dei Santi Lorenzo e Leonardo in Castelfiorentino, a liturgical choir book produced in Tuscany during the late Middle Ages. At an unknown date, at least one illuminated leaf was removed from the volume and entered the international antiquarian market.

For years, the leaf circulated independently from its parent manuscript. Detached from its codicological

context, it was transformed into an autonomous art object whose commercial value depended primarily upon the quality of its illumination rather than upon its relationship to the original choir book.

On 18 September 2015, the leaf appeared at auction in Zurich, offered by Koller Auktionen as lot 121. The sale catalogue described the miniature and attributed it to a Tuscan artistic milieu. The estimate reflected the growing international demand for detached illuminated leaves originating from medieval choir books.

Particularly relevant is the fact that the catalogue relied upon the expertise of F.G. His scholarly authority contributed to the identification and valuation of the object.

At the time of the sale, the leaf was presented as an individual work of art. Yet subsequent investigations established that it originated from a manuscript belonging to an Italian cultural institution and that its circulation on the market raised significant provenance concerns.

The case eventually attracted the attention of the Italian authorities.

The leaf was subsequently recovered through the intervention of the Carabinieri TPC and returned to Italy. Its recovery confirmed that the object offered on the

market was not simply an isolated work of art but a component of a larger manuscript from which it had been removed.

The Castelfiorentino case is important for several reasons.

First, it demonstrates that the circulation of detached leaves originating from Italian manuscripts was not limited to the Turin MS E.V.5 affair. Similar patterns can be observed in multiple cases involving liturgical manuscripts, choir books, books of hours, and other codices whose integrity had been compromised.

Second, it illustrates the central role played by expertise within the antiquarian market. Dealers, auction houses, and collectors rely upon recognised specialists to identify, describe, and contextualise manuscript material. Such expertise often determines both scholarly interpretation and commercial value.

Third, the case introduces F.G. into a broader historical context that predates the ReceptioGate affair itself.

When Rossi began documenting manuscript dismemberment and submitting reports to the Italian authorities, his name already appeared in connection with a manuscript leaf that had circulated on the market before being recovered by the Carabinieri TPC. This fact alone does not establish wrongdoing. It does, however,

explain why his name emerged in the documentation assembled by Rossi and why he reacted with particular concern to the reports submitted to the authorities.

The significance of the Castelfiorentino leaf became even clearer after 2022.

As the campaign against Rossi intensified, F.G. repeatedly contacted her regarding the reports submitted to the Carabinieri TPC. According to preserved correspondence, he expressed concern about the consequences of these initiatives and attempted to persuade her not to pursue further legal action. His communications reveal an unusual degree of interest in investigations relating to manuscript provenance and the antiquarian market.

Viewed in isolation, the Castelfiorentino case may appear to concern only a single illuminated leaf. Examined alongside Turin MS E.V.5 and other documented examples, however, it becomes part of a larger pattern.

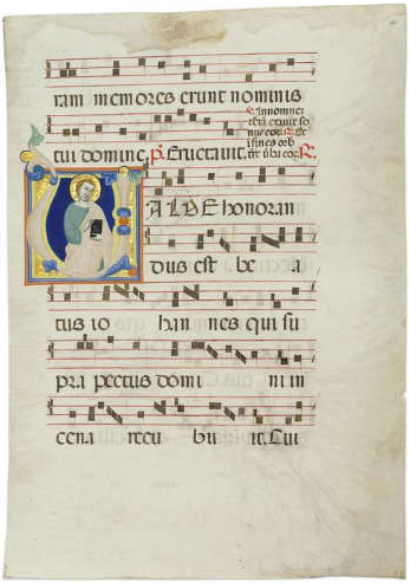
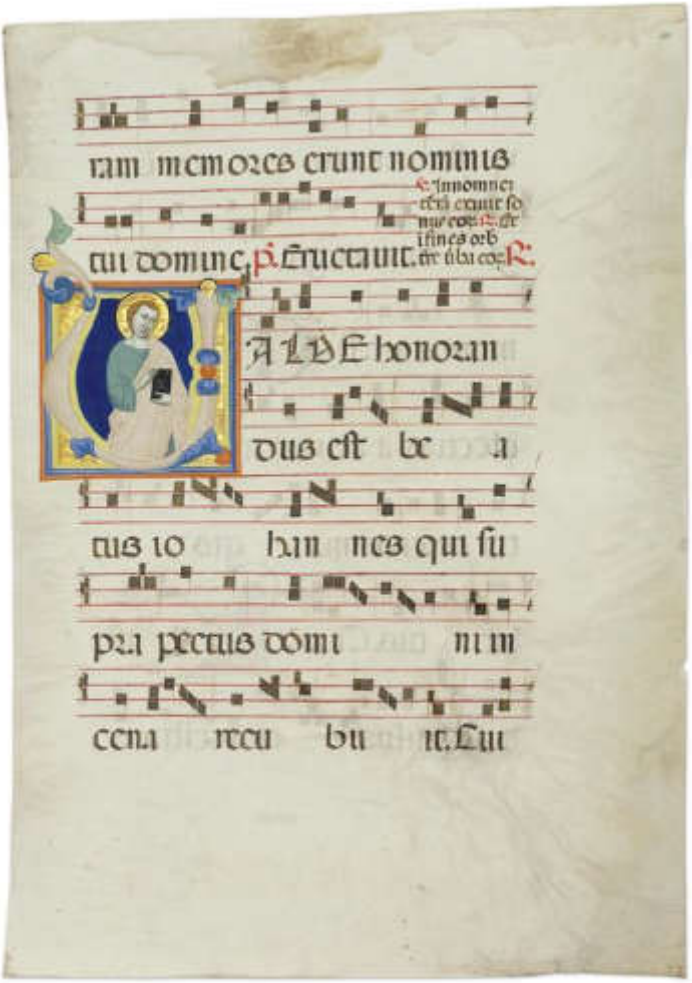
The same questions recur.

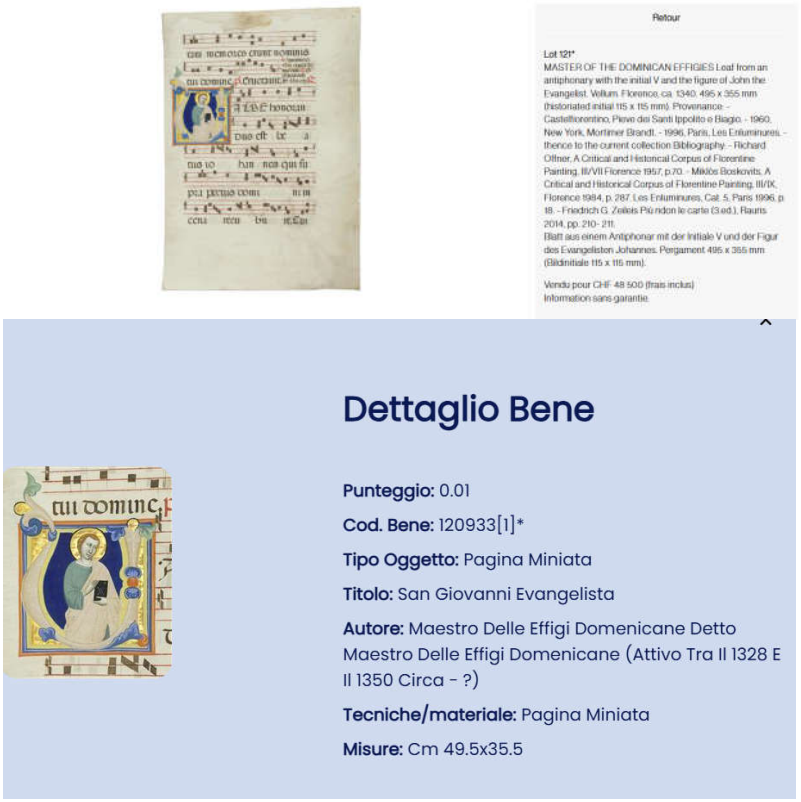
How did leaves removed from Italian manuscripts enter the international market?

What provenance checks were undertaken before they were offered for sale?

What role was played by cataloguers, consultants, and academic specialists?

And why did the scholars who raised such questions subsequently become the targets of intense professional and personal attacks?

The Castelfiorentino leaf does not answer these questions. It does, however, provide an additional piece of evidence demonstrating that the issues raised by the ReceptioGate affair extended far beyond a single manuscript or a single individual.

Koller Auktionen catalogue entry, Zurich, 18 September 2015, lot 121


KOLLER
ACHETER
VENDRE
DÉPARTEMENTS
NEWS
SERVICE
Retour
Lot 121*
MASTER OF THE DOMINICAN EFFIGIES Leaf from an antiphonary with the initial V and the figure of John the Evangelist. Vellum. Florence, ca. 1340. 495 x 355 mm (historiated initial 115 x 115 mm). Provenance: - Castelfiorentino, Pieve dei Santi Ippolito e Biagio. - 1960, New York, Mortimer Brandt. - 1996, Paris, Les Enluminures. - thence to the current collection Bibliography: - Richard Offner, A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting, III/VII Florence 1957, p.70. - Miklós Boskovits, A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting, III/IX, Florence 1984, p. 287, Les Enluminures, Cat. 5, Paris 1996, p. 18. - Friedrich G. Zeitels Più ridon le carte (3.ed.), Rauris 2014, pp. 210- 211.
Blatt aus einem Antiphonar mit der Initiale V und der Figur des Evangelisten Johannes. Pergament 495 x 355 mm (Bildinitiale 115 x 115 mm).
Vendu pour CHF 48 500 (frais inclus)
Information sans-garantie
Dettaglio Bene
Punteggio: 0.01
Cod. Bene: 120933[1]*
Tipo Oggetto: Pagina Miniata
Titolo: San Giovanni Evangelista
Autore: Maestro Delle Effigi Domenicane Detto Maestro Delle Effigi Domenicane (Attivo Tra Il 1328 E Il 1350 Circa - ?)
Tecniche/materiale: Pagina Miniata
Misure: Cm 49.5x35.5

Documentation relating to the recovery and restitution of the leaf by the Italian Carabinieri TPC

×

Dettaglio Bene

Punteggio: 0.02344

Cod. Bene: 120933[1]*

Tipo Oggetto: Pagina Miniata

Titolo: San Giovanni Evangelista

Autore: Maestro Delle Effigi Domenicane Detto Maestro Delle Effigi Domenicane (Attivo Tra Il 1328 E Il 1350 Circa - ?)

Tecniche/materiale: Pagina Miniata

Misure: Cm 49.5x35.5

Part II – Receptio: Resilience and Silent Continuity

Chapter 1

The Establishment and Dissolution of the Fondazione Internazionale RECEPTIO

One of the most frequently repeated claims circulated during the ReceptioGate affair was that RECEPTIO had never existed as a genuine research centre and that its activities had been largely fictitious. Such allegations appeared in blog posts, anonymous communications, social-media discussions, and even in journalistic articles published during the height of the campaign.

The documentary evidence tells a very different story.

The following pages reproduce only a small portion of the extensive documentation relating to RECEPTIO's activities between 2016 and 2025: official records, conference programmes, lectures, research projects, publications, public events, institutional collaborations, videos, photographs, websites, and academic initiatives carried out over nearly a decade. Taken together, these materials demonstrate the existence of a functioning research centre whose activities were visible, documented, and publicly accessible long before the

beginning of the ReceptioGate affair.

RECEPTIO was founded in Lugano, Switzerland, in 2016 through the initiative of a group of scholars committed to the study of European manuscript culture, textual transmission, and the reconstruction of dismembered codices. The centre's activities were supported by the Fondazione Internazionale RECEPTIO, a legally registered Swiss foundation established to promote research, publications, conferences, and projects relating to the preservation of European manuscript heritage.

From the outset, RECEPTIO developed a distinctive research profile. Its work combined traditional philology, codicology, art history, and digital humanities, with particular attention devoted to manuscripts that had been physically dismantled and dispersed through the antiquarian market. Through the use of digital reconstruction techniques, archival research, and international collaboration, the centre sought to restore intellectual and codicological unity to manuscripts that had been reduced to isolated leaves and miniatures.

Over the following years, RECEPTIO organised conferences, workshops, lectures, and public presentations; developed international research collaborations; published books and scholarly articles; supervised digital reconstruction projects; and

established an extensive online presence through websites, videos, and open-access initiatives. Many of these activities continued even after the beginning of the defamatory campaign launched against its founder.

The images reproduced in this section document that reality.

They show conference programmes, public lectures, institutional announcements, academic publications, research projects, video recordings, websites, and events organised between 2016 and 2025. They constitute direct evidence of a centre that not only existed, but remained active throughout the very period during which commentators were publicly claiming the opposite.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore not polemical. It is documentary.

Before examining the attacks directed against RECEPTIO, it is necessary to establish a simple historical fact: the centre existed, operated publicly for years, produced a substantial body of scholarly work, and left an extensive documentary record that remains accessible today.

By 2019, the activities of RECEPTIO had expanded to such an extent that a new legal framework was deemed necessary. On the advice of Prof. Dr. h.c. Paolo

Bernasconi—a former public prosecutor in the Canton of Ticino and a lecturer in law—the centre was transformed into a Swiss private foundation: the Fondazione Internazionale RECEPTIO. Bernasconi's legal guidance, as well as his reputation as a specialist in international and financial law, gave the institution added juridical strength and public credibility[1].

The creation of the foundation would later become one of the principal targets of the campaign directed against RECEPTIO. Rather than limiting his criticism to scholarly disagreements, Peter Kidd repeatedly questioned the very existence and legitimacy of the institution and of the individuals associated with it.

Over a period of several years, Kidd publicly claimed that RECEPTIO was a fictitious organisation, despite its documented activities, publications, conferences, research projects, and legal registration. He further alleged that several individuals associated with the centre either did not exist or had been falsely presented. Among the most striking examples was his assertion that Antoni Rossell, Professor of Medieval Literature at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and one of the scholars collaborating with RECEPTIO, was merely the name of a deceased academic being fraudulently appropriated. Similar claims were directed at Paolo

Bernasconi, whose existence, professional status, and legal involvement with the foundation were likewise questioned despite his well-known public career as a former public prosecutor and legal scholar.

As the controversy escalated, the scope of these allegations expanded further. Following the publication of Rossi's investigations into manuscript dismemberment and the antiquarian market, online discussions and blog posts began to cast doubt upon Rossi's own identity, suggesting that even the scholar at the centre of the dispute might not be who she claimed to be. The progression of these accusations—from questioning research findings, to questioning institutions, to questioning the existence of collaborators, legal advisers, and ultimately the researcher herself—reveals an extraordinary pattern that went far beyond ordinary academic criticism.

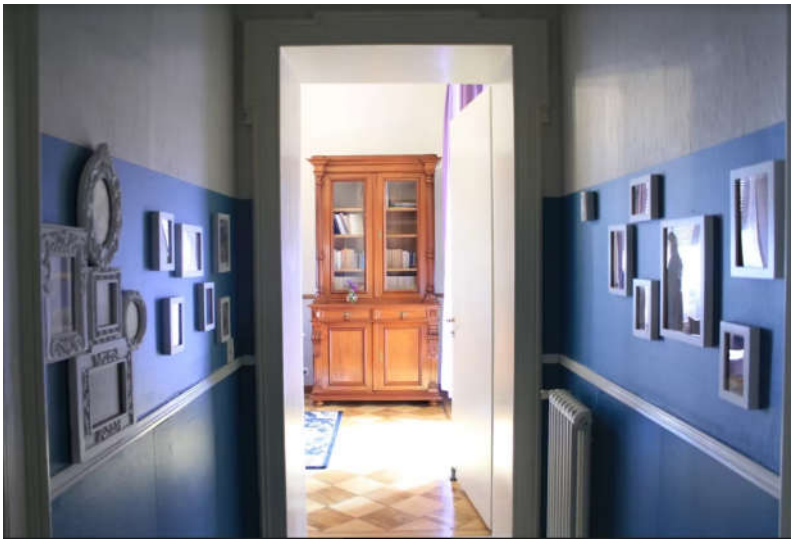
The significance of these allegations lies not in their plausibility, which was repeatedly contradicted by publicly available evidence, but in the extent to which they were circulated and repeated within the broader campaign that came to be known as ReceptioGate.

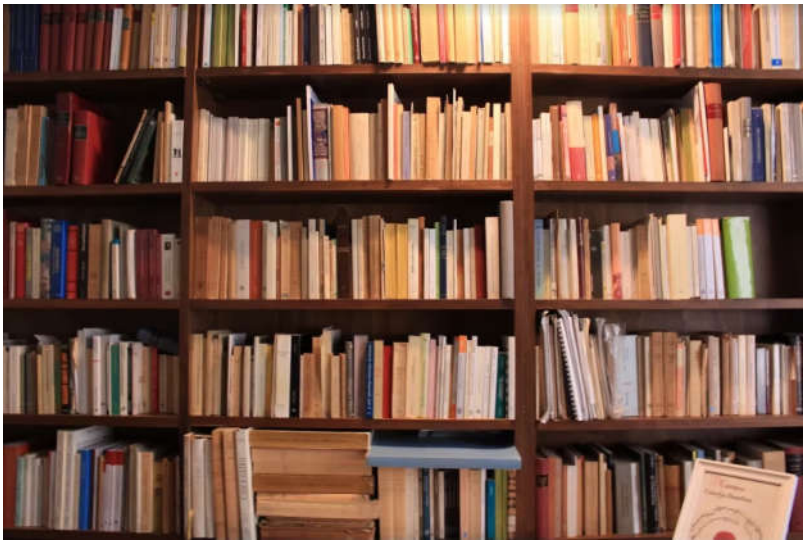
In 2019, a villa in central Lugano Vialla Giambonini, Figs. 1-8) was rented to house the research library and to

host international scholars. Its reading room, offices and collection of twenty thousand volumes were actively used until late 2020, when the property changed ownership and the foundation was forced to vacate the premises[2].

Fig. 1. Photograph of the inauguration of the research centre, located at Villa Giambonini, Viale Castagnola 27, 6900 Lugano, taken on 4 October 2019. Visible in the image are Prof. Rossi, Dr Francesca Ceci, and Prof. Rossi's students and doctoral candidates Marco Nava and Jonathan Schiesaro, attending the event. Credits ISFiDa (www.isfida.eu). In the following pics, further moments from the event and images of the library located at Villa Giambonini are shown.

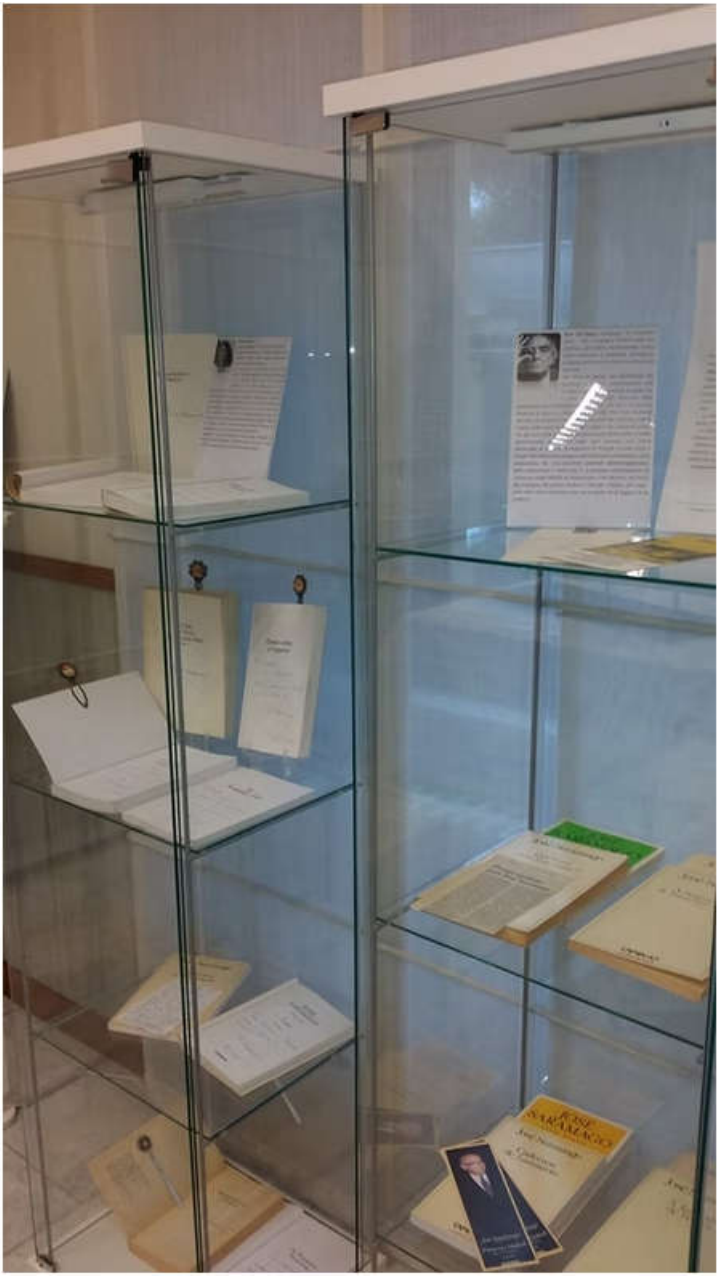
4 ottobre 2019
0re 18:00
Inaugurazione del centro
RECEPTIO
ARTIFICES





https://www.isfida.eu/galleria?pgid=k1ewnh12-eb4688b0-3730-4d80-a021-e7dd727ceee7

https://www.isfida.eu/galleria?pgid=k1ewnh12-30fd0935-4f01-4f7e-b97a-1851225ffe83


JOSÉ
SARAMAGO

Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the constraints it imposed on the functioning of cultural institutions throughout Europe, RECEPTIO continued its work. In 2021, faced with the impossibility of maintaining the foundation structure due to the pandemic's economic impact, the organisation reverted to its original legal form as a cultural association. It continued to function under the same name, hosted events, and maintained its publishing arm and scientific committee. A new headquarters was established at Casa La Rosa, where activities resumed with the support of the Société Internationale de Philologie[3].

The 2022 campaign culminated in an article by Raphael Rauch on the Swiss Catholic media platform *Kath.ch*, which falsely claimed that RECEPTIO was a "fake institute", that its library was a "front", and that Prof. Bernasconi—its legal advisor—was a fictional character or a "drug lawyer"[8]. The piece, evidently based on information fed by Kidd, was later removed following complaints and fact-checking. The article's removal implicitly acknowledged the groundlessness of the accusations.

In response, RECEPTIO implemented a low-profile strategy, removing identifying details from its website

and publishing video recordings of its seminars and lectures only after the events had taken place. Its official YouTube channel remains the public archive of its activities[9].

Far from fading into obscurity, the centre adapted and persisted. In 2023, the Organisation pour la Protection des Manuscrits Médiévaux (OProM) was founded in Paris to support RECEPTIO's mission and to counteract the defamatory campaign through verified documentation, public advocacy, and international legal coordination. In addition to numerous letters of support from the academic community, legal proceedings were initiated in Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Prof. Bernasconi himself, whose long-standing legal career is publicly documented[10], was informed of the defamatory campaign and, after assessing the available evidence, advised that no formal response to the false allegations was necessary. In his professional opinion, the factual documentation—such as the official status of the centre, the video recordings of its activities, and the extensive archival material—clearly demonstrated the unfounded nature of the attacks.

The resilience of the RECEPTIO model—scholarly independence, ethical rigour, and refusal to capitulate to sensationalism—now stands as a rare example of

resistance to reputational aggression in the digital age. The defamation campaign, now widely recognised as a constructed narrative promoted by extra-academic actors with commercial or personal interests, has only strengthened the institutional reputation of RECEPTIO.

Notes

[1] See the official profile of the Fondazione Internazionale RECEPTIO on Fundraiso: https://www.fundraiso.ch/it/organisations/fondazione-internazionale-receptio

[2] See images of the research villa and library on the official RECEPTIO website: https://www.receptio.eu/gallery

[3] Rental contract and documents from Casa La Rosa available from www.receptio.eu.

[4] Peter Kidd's blog, *Medieval Manuscripts Provenance*: https://mssprovenance.blogspot.com

[5] C. Rossi, "Manoscritti medievali europei a prezzi stracciati sul web", *AboutArt Online*, 20 December 2022: https://www.aboutartonline.com/manoscritti-medievali-europei-a-prezzi-stracciati-sul-web-un-appello-per-la-tutela-di-beni-culturali-tra-i-piu-preziosi

[6] Archived version of the false obituary: https://web.archive.org/web/20230127205042/https://www.deinadieu.ch/todesanzeigen/carla-rossi/

[7] Rossi's death threat emails (PDF): https://www.profcarlarossi.info/_files/ugd/494184_8582d827636f4

514956f3e79677224fe.pdf

[8] Deleted *Kath.ch* article by R. Rauch: https://www.kath.ch/newsd/carla-rossis-fake-institut-wirbt-mit-alibi-bibliothek-und-drogenanwalt

[9] Official RECEPTIO YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@receptio

[10] Legal profile of Prof. Dr. h.c. Paolo Bernasconi: http://www.pblaw.ch/Prof-dr-hc-Paolo-Bernasconi.html

The Orchestrated Defamation Campaign and its Chronology

August–October 2022: Formal Denunciation and Public Disclosure

In August 2022, Prof. Carla Rossi submitted a formal report to the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC), denouncing the dismantling of medieval manuscripts for commercial gain and the circulation of detached leaves originating from public and ecclesiastical collections. The report focused on a broader pattern of manuscript dismemberment affecting Italian cultural heritage, including codices that had been unlawfully removed from libraries, archives, and religious institutions before being broken apart and dispersed through the international antiquarian market.

Among the cases later examined in greater detail was Turin MS E.V.5, an early sixteenth-century manuscript preserved at the Biblioteca Universitaria di Torino. Three illuminated folios had been removed from the manuscript in 1979 and subsequently entered the international manuscript trade. The leaves appeared in Sotheby's sales in London in 2013 and again in 2015. The catalogue descriptions for the 2015 sale were prepared by

Peter Kidd. Following investigations conducted by the Italian authorities, the folios were eventually recovered and returned to the Biblioteca Universitaria di Torino in 2018.

Although the Turin manuscript did not constitute the sole focus of the 2022 denunciation, the case later assumed particular significance because it provided a documented example of the circulation of detached manuscript leaves originating from an Italian public collection. The recovery of the folios reinforced concerns regarding provenance research, the responsibilities of experts and auction houses, and the mechanisms through which dismembered manuscripts continue to circulate on the international market.

On 20 December 2022, Rossi published an article on AboutArt drawing public attention to the ongoing problem of medieval manuscripts and illuminated leaves being traded online at remarkably low prices despite serious provenance concerns. The article referred explicitly to the denunciation submitted to the TPC and called for stronger protection of manuscript heritage and greater scrutiny of the trade in detached leaves.

Only two days later, the controversy that would later become known as ReceptioGate began to emerge.

In October 2022, Prof. Rossi filed a supplementary

report, expanding the scope of the denunciation to include French and German manuscripts subjected to similar trafficking channels. Among the manuscripts documented in this expanded report was the so-called *De Roucy Hours*, a Book of Hours dismembered and sold in isolated leaves, whose dispersion involved Peter Kidd directly. In October 2022, Prof. Rossi filed a supplementary report, expanding the scope of the denunciation to include French and German manuscripts subjected to similar trafficking channels. Among the items listed in this second report was the so-called *De Roucy Hours*, a dismembered Book of Hours whose detached folios had entered the international market. This case was later detailed by Prof. Rossi in her monograph *Isabelle Boursier's Book of Hours, a Dismembered Manuscript from Mary Benson's Collection*, where she reconstructed the provenance and commercial trajectory of the codex and traced Kidd's role in the dismemberment of the manuscript and dissemination of its cut folios (pp. 25–45). Both reports were supported by comparative documentation and provenance analysis.

On 20 December 2022, an article authored by Prof. Rossi was published in the peer-reviewed art journal *AboutArt Online*, entitled *Manoscritti medievali europei a prezzi*

stracciati sul web: un appello per la tutela di beni culturali tra i più preziosi. The article made explicit reference to the TPC reports, alerting the academic community and calling for greater ethical responsibility in the face of manuscript dismemberment practices[1].

22–23 December 2022: Internal Sabotage and Initial Retaliation

On 22 December 2022, an email was sent to members of the *Società Internazionale di Storia della Miniatura* (SISM), using the society's official mailing list and institutional email address. The message contained defamatory statements targeting Prof. Rossi and her published appeal. Crucially, the defamatory message falsely appeared to originate from the society's president, Prof. Alessandra Perriccioli Saggese, whose name was used without her awareness, thus misleading recipients into believing the communication was official. It has since been established that the email originated from a retired faculty member of the University of Zurich, an individual with close personal ties to British blogger Peter Kidd. This academic, who is also a long-time member of SISM, exploited the society's unprotected mailing infrastructure to disseminate discrediting material to

hundreds of recipients[2].
On 23 December 2022, Peter Kidd published a blog post entitled *Nobody cares about your blog!* on his self-managed website *Medieval Manuscripts Provenance*. The post launched an overt personal attack on Prof. Rossi and questioned the existence and legitimacy of the RECEPTIO centre[3].

Late December 2022 – Early January 2023: Escalation and Aggression

Between 24 and 31 December 2022, Kidd sent multiple aggressive emails to RECEPTIO's official address and to a young researcher affiliated with the centre, who had published findings on a dismembered manuscript. The emails included threats of reputational damage, false claims of plagiarism, and pressure to retract academic work[4].
During this period, defamatory content was circulated anonymously via Gmail accounts and in the comment sections of various blogs and Twitter threads. These communications falsely stated that RECEPTIO was a "non-existent" institution, that its library was "fictional", and that its advisory board was composed of "deceased" members.

On 27 December 2022, Kidd publicly accused Prof. Rossi of unauthorised use of images and of plagiarising textual descriptions from his blog. These accusations were rapidly disproven through dated communications from art galleries and by documentation of independent research paths, made available through RECEPTIO's website[5].

In the same timeframe—during the final week of December 2022—Peter Kidd contacted the Swiss Catholic news portal *Kath.ch*, encouraging journalist Raphael Rauch to publish a defamatory article. The piece, entitled *Carla Rossi's fake institut wirbt mit Alibi-Bibliothek und Drogenanwalt*, appeared briefly online and falsely claimed that the RECEPTIO library was "fictitious" and that Prof. Paolo Bernasconi—a highly respected jurist and academic—was either a non-existent figure or merely a "drug lawyer". The article, riddled with demonstrable factual inaccuracies, was subsequently removed from the *Kath.ch* website[6].

January–February 2023: Threats, Obituaries, and Personal Harassment

In January 2023, multiple death threats were received via email by Prof. Rossi, her colleagues, and academics who

had publicly voiced support for RECEPTIO. These threats have been archived and are now accessible in a public dossier[7].

Around mid-January 2023, two fake obituaries for Prof. Rossi appeared on a Swiss funeral announcement platform, implying mafia-like intimidation. The false death notices were traced to anonymous users and later archived for documentation[8].

Between January and March 2023, several Wikipedia pages related to Prof. Rossi were systematically vandalised with defamatory content. Repeated edits and re-edits prompted the platform's administrators to ultimately suppress the pages involved.

During the same period, journalists—alerted by defamatory online material—appeared at Prof. Rossi's residence, photographing her mailbox and disclosing her home address, in a severe breach of privacy. Simultaneously, images of her daughters were published on Twitter by accounts linked to the same network of harassment.

March–December 2023: Strategic Withdrawal and Continued Activity

In response to these unprecedented attacks, RECEPTIO

adopted a more discreet public communication strategy. The centre ceased regular website updates and began publishing documentation of its seminars and conferences only after the events, via its official YouTube channel[9].

Despite the campaign, Prof. Rossi continued her academic activities uninterrupted. She published several peer-reviewed monographs, presented at international conferences, and held appointments and lectureships in institutions including the University of Salento, the University of Barcelona[10].

In November 2023, legal proceedings were initiated in Italy and the United Kingdom against individuals responsible for the defamatory campaign. Investigations by the Carabinieri TPC and legal filings coordinated by OProM are ongoing[11].

Notes

[1] C. Rossi, *Manoscritti medievali europei a prezzi stracciati sul web*, *AboutArt*, 20 December 2022, https://www.aboutartonline.com/manoscritti-medievali-europei-a-prezzi-stracciati-sul-web-un-appello-per-la-tutela-di-beni-culturali-tra-i-piu-preziosi/

[2] Confirmed by internal correspondence and testimony from SISM members. On the manipulation of the mailing list and lack of

privacy compliance, see: https://www.oprom.eu/snsf

[3] P. Kidd, *Nobody cares about your blog!*, *Medieval Manuscripts Provenance*, 23 December 2022, https://mssprovenance.blogspot.com/2022/12/nobody-cares-about-your-blog.html

[4] Emails archived by RECEPTIO. Available for judicial review.

[5] Full rebuttal dossier, including gallery correspondence: https://www.receptio.eu/diffamazione (esp. annexes 24–28).

[6] R. Rauch, *Carla Rossi's fake institut wirbt mit Alibi-Bibliothek und Drogenanwalt*, *Kath.ch* (now removed); original URL: https://www.kath.ch/newsd/carla-rossis-fake-institut-wirbt-mit-alibi-bibliothek-und-drogenanwalt/

[7] Archive of threatening emails (PDF): https://www.profcarlarossi.info/_files/ugd/494184_8582d827636f4514956f3e79677224fe.pdf

[8] Archived obituary: https://web.archive.org/web/20230127205042/https://www.deinadieu.ch/todesanzeigen/carla-rossi/

[9] RECEPTIO Official YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@receptio

[10] Academic activity overview : https://www.oprom.eu/19-22 and https://www.oprom.eu/fac-similes

[11] Legal summary by OProM: https://oprom.substack.com/p/documented-timeline-of-the-defamation

Chapter 2

The Plagiarism Allegations: A Legal and Scholarly Response

In the aftermath of the defamation campaign directed against RECEPTIO and Prof. Carla Rossi, a second phase of attacks emerged. The focus shifted from the existence and activities of the research centre to allegations concerning Rossi's scholarly publications. These accusations sought to undermine her academic credibility and, by extension, the legitimacy of the research conducted under the auspices of RECEPTIO.

Among the claims advanced by critics were allegations of plagiarism and self-plagiarism concerning three publications devoted to manuscript reconstruction and provenance research. The accusations were widely circulated online and repeatedly presented as evidence of academic misconduct.

The contestations specifically concerned:

(i) a monograph reconstructing a dismembered medieval manuscript, The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy, accused of plagiarising material from a blog maintained by Peter Kidd;

The first allegation was particularly remarkable. The volume *The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy* was based

on years of archival, codicological, and provenance research concerning a manuscript that had been dismantled and dispersed through the antiquarian market. The accusation asserted that Rossi had appropriated information previously published on Peter Kidd's Manuscript Provenance blog. Yet many of the data, identifications, and reconstructions presented in the monograph derived from primary sources, archival documentation, auction catalogues, and original research undertaken over several years. Moreover, the book advanced conclusions that differed substantially from those presented on the blog and documented aspects of the manuscript's history that had not previously been reconstructed.

The allegations acquired institutional significance when they became part of proceedings involving the University of Zurich and the Swiss National Science Foundation. For several years, the accusations were repeatedly cited as evidence of serious academic misconduct.

The legal and scholarly evaluation of these claims eventually produced a very different conclusion.

On 7 January 2026, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court (Bundesverwaltungsgericht / Tribunal administratif fédéral), in case B-2940/2024, issued a judgment that fundamentally altered the narrative

surrounding the affair. The Court annulled the decision through which the Swiss National Science Foundation had sought to recover research funding connected with the Louis de Roucy project. In its ruling, the Court found that the SNSF's position could not be upheld and rejected the recovery claim.

The judgment marked a decisive turning point. Although debates concerning citation practices and self-reuse of previously published material remained separate scholarly questions, the central narrative according to which Rossi's research constituted a fraudulent enterprise collapsed under judicial scrutiny. The Court's decision demonstrated that the allegations which had circulated for years in blogs, emails, and social-media discussions could not simply be treated as established facts.

The significance of the ruling extended beyond the immediate dispute. It highlighted the dangers of allowing online campaigns, personal hostilities, and unverified accusations to influence assessments of academic work. It also reinforced the importance of distinguishing between legitimate scholarly criticism and attempts to weaponise allegations of plagiarism in order to discredit a researcher and the institutions associated with her work.

(ii) a scholarly volume on the painter Bronzino, which was targeted with accusations of self-plagiarism;

(iii) an essay analysing the fate of Jewish refugees in Switzerland between 1943 and 1945, challenged for alleged instances of plagiarism, primarily based on paraphrasing and the use of archival documents.

The allegations to which Prof. Rossi legally responded did not seem to rest on any recognised academic standard for plagiarism evaluation. Instead, they appeared to conflate common iconographic descriptors with acts of literary appropriation, a conflation that is both legally and academically untenable.

Faced with these accusations, and in order to preserve both her professional reputation and the institutional credibility of RECEPTIO, Prof. Rossi undertook formal legal action. Rather than addressing the issue through media channels or public polemics, she chose to respond via official judicial avenues. A comprehensive memorandum was submitted by her legal representative to the Swiss Federal Administrative Court (Bundesverwaltungsgericht, BVGer) in St. Gallen, refuting in detail every point raised by the anonymous

accusers. The document, titled *Stellungnahme zur Wahrung der persönlichen und wissenschaftlichen Integrität von Prof. Dr. Carla Rossi*, was lodged on 31 March 2025.
The memorandum included a forensic expert opinion *pro veritate*. The expert's report, provided a page-by-page analysis of the contested works.

The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy
URL: https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=kRDgEAAAQBAJ

The first and most significant accusation concerned the "title of the miniatures" in *The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy*. According to the claims

> the titles of the miniatures in Rossi 2022 are identical to the titles of these miniatures in the blog [of Peter Kidd] with minor adaptations. Other titles are identical. Some of them, e.g., 29v, 32v or 65r-66r, in a single or very few words. Further: in Rossi 2022, the list ends with 97r and 106r whereas the list in the blog ends with 96r and 105r.

A comparative analysis was conducted as part of Prof. Rossi's legal response. It demonstrated that the accusations replicated, almost verbatim, claims originally made on Peter Kidd's personal blog and incorrectly

described the nomenclature of the miniatures as **titles of the miniatures**. In fact, as was carefully detailed, in art historical and codicological studies, the terms used to describe scenes depicted in illuminated miniatures—such as "Annunciation", "Visitation", "Deposition", or "Annunciation to the Shepherds"—are not the result of subjective creative acts by any individual author. Rather, they are standardised iconographic labels that have been employed across centuries to identify biblical scenes.

These accusations of plagiarism were therefore based on the use by Prof. Rossi of terms that are **generic** and **widely accepted** in academic and art-historical language. A basic search using public tools such as Google Books reveals hundreds of occurrences of each of these descriptors, spread across academic publications, legal regulations, chronicles, exhibition catalogues, and numerous other types of sources. It is evident that these are terms of common usage, not only in scholarly contexts but also in general non-academic communication.

In the specific case at hand, such terms represent **standardised denominations** for religious iconographies. It must be stressed that no copyright protects the use of terms like "Annunciation" or "Visitation", nor do these words meet the threshold of creativity or originality

necessary to warrant protection under intellectual property law. Therefore, the conclusion is unequivocal: the use of such standardised terms does not constitute a copyright violation or a breach of any intellectual property norms.

Divergence in Folio Numbers: Evidence of Independent Research

Among the points raised by the party making the accusations was the following observation: *"Further, in Rossi 2022, the list ends with 97r and 106r whereas the list in the blog ends with 96r and 105r."*
At first glance, this may appear to be a minor numerical discrepancy. However, its implications are far from negligible. In fact, the statement itself constitutes an implicit **admission** that the lists in the two sources—namely, the academic monograph *The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy* and Peter Kidd's personal blog—do not coincide.

Comparative Assessment
From the standpoint of scholarly methodology and intellectual property, a divergence in the sequence or numbering of manuscript folios is a **relevant and positive**

indicator of independent work. The very fact that Rossi's list extends to folios 97r and 106r, whereas Kidd's blog stops at 96r and 105r, demonstrates that Rossi conducted a separate analysis. This variation undermines any hypothesis of direct appropriation, since plagiarism, by definition, entails *substantial and unacknowledged textual correspondence*.

In academic and legal standards alike, the presence of **non-identical data**, especially in a field such as codicology where each folio has specific structural and iconographic value, is a significant factor that weighs against allegations of copying. Independent numbering—particularly when it results from distinct criteria used to reconstruct the manuscript's original sequence—must be understood not as a defect, but as proof of methodological autonomy.

In this instance, the discrepancy in the last folio numbers represents precisely such a divergence. It reveals that the author of *The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy* did not follow Kidd's structure, but rather established her own foliation based on separate research paths, documentary evidence, and physical inspection of digital surrogates or surviving leaves. Any presumption of plagiarism must be dismissed on these grounds alone, since it is the **coincidence**, not the divergence, that would demand

further scrutiny.

Legal-Philological Evaluation: The presence of differing folio numbers actually substantiates the independence of Rossi's research. A plagiarised list would, by definition, replicate the source material exactly. The divergence in foliation indicates an autonomous analysis and contradicts the premise of plagiarism.

Accusation of Plagiarism in the Auction Listings

Allegation: Prof. Rossi allegedly copied a list of manuscript leaves sold at auction from the blog of Peter Kidd.

Legal-Philological Evaluation: The blog in question does not provide a comprehensive list of auctioned folios. It features only selected miniatures—often without recto-verso views—and excludes textual leaves. Rossi's publication, by contrast, documents **127 folios, including text leaves and decorative borders**. Furthermore, her book identifies **three additional miniatures not present in the blog.** This extensive comparative work is accompanied by philological transcriptions, further demonstrating independent and original scholarly labour.

Accusation of Plagiarism Regarding the Structure of Books of Hours

Allegation: Prof. Rossi is said to have copied a standard outline describing the structure of Books of Hours from the McGill University Library website.

Legal-Philological Evaluation:

The accusation that a scholar who has spent over thirty years reconstructing dismembered Books of Hours might need to *copy*—and supposedly not even successfully—from a generalist library website is, in itself, difficult to take seriously. Prof. Rossi's academic work, including multiple monographs and peer-reviewed publications, systematically engages with the structure, liturgical content, and textual sequences typical of Books of Hours. The structural outline cited as evidence of "plagiarism" corresponds to standardised content taught in basic codicology courses and printed in dozens of manuals and catalogues since the mid-20th century. It reflects no original contribution on the part of the McGill Library's online summary and is not subject to copyright or creative attribution.

Indeed, it would be challenging to identify a single codicological handbook, from the *Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental* to more recent reference works, that does *not* include similar outlines. The typology of a Book of Hours—calendar, pericopes, Hours of the Virgin, Passion, Office of the Dead, Suffrages, etc.—is both codified and canonised in historical scholarship.
Prof. Rossi herself has described this structure in detail across multiple publications, years before and after the contested volume.
These include, but are not limited to:

- 2022, *WayBack Recovery, Manuale metodologico per la ricostruzione digitale di manoscritti smembrati*, Receptio Academic Press.
- 2022 Biblioclasm & Digital Reconstruction, TCLA, Vol. 6. No. 1, August 2022, Special Issue
- 2022, B*iblioclastia a scopo di lucro e culto feticistico dei frammenti di manoscritti medievali* in Studj romanzi, XVIII, pp. 161-196, 2022.
- 2024, *Isabelle Boursier's Book of Hours, a Dismembered Manuscript from Mary Benson's Collection* (Cambridge Scholars).
- 2024, *Digital Reconstruction of a Dismembered Book of Hours Illuminated by Robert Boyvin*

(Cambridge Scholars).

- *2025, Il laccio d'amore H&M. Il Libro d'ore di Hendrik III van Nassau e Mencía de Mendoza*. Commentario, Imago Srl.
- 2025, Miniatrici Fiamminghe: Il Libro d'Ore miniato da Babekin e Tannekin Boems, Commentario al manoscritto W.173 di Baltimora Imago Srl.
- 2025, *Il manoscritto 198 della Guarneriana*, forthcoming.

In each of these works, the author discusses with philological precision the internal articulation of devotional manuscripts, their liturgical sequence, and regional variants. This consistent engagement with the subject across decades undermines any claim of intellectual appropriation from a web-based teaching resource.

In conclusion, this allegation seems not only legally baseless but intellectually offensive. It relies on the improbable premise that a recognised expert in the reconstruction of Books of Hours would resort to an anonymous digital summary for material that she has been analysing, cataloguing, and publishing—independently—for over three decades.

Accusation of Use of "Unauthorised Images"

Allegation: The use of images from auction catalogues or those allegedly associated with Peter Kidd was presented as an infringement.

Legal-Philological Evaluation: The images used in Rossi's book were obtained with explicit permission from the relevant galleries and archives, as proven by email correspondence on file. The images do not bear private watermarks or proprietary markers, and many are freely circulating in public catalogues or auction previews.

The accusation that the claimant used, on page 19 of the book (*The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy*), an image allegedly copied from a blog post authored by Peter Kidd is entirely unfounded. The claim centres on the supposed presence of a **"hair"** in the image published in the book—asserted to be identical to one visible in an image on Kidd's blog, and therefore considered an identifier of origin.

This line of argumentation is both implausible and methodologically untenable. Aside from the obvious evidentiary problems associated with attributing ownership of a "hair" in a digital scan or photograph—especially in the absence of forensic validation—the

image in question, as published in Prof. Rossi's book, does not, in fact, include the "hair" mentioned in the blog version.

This discrepancy alone is sufficient to disqualify the accusation, which is based on an unverifiable visual element whose presence is not substantiated in the claimant's publication. Consequently, the allegation of unauthorised image reproduction based on this argument cannot be upheld.

Fair Use and the Use of Archival and Auction Catalogue Material

Beyond the specific example above, the general principle of "fair use" (or "legitimate use") must be considered when evaluating the legality of image or data reproduction for academic purposes. Under well-established norms in both European and international copyright law, the use of images or text for the purpose of research, teaching, commentary, or criticism is broadly permitted, provided that such use does not cause economic harm to the rights-holder or compromise the commercial value of the original source.

In the case under consideration, the image in question derives from a Sotheby's auction catalogue dating back to 1954. Such auction records are not protected by

copyright, particularly in regard to factual data (titles, lot numbers, brief descriptions, etc.), which are excluded from protection under prevailing intellectual property legislation.

The image reproduced in Prof. Rossi's book consists of a minute portion of a single page from the 1954 catalogue and was included exclusively to document factual data—specifically, the list of miniatures and a succinct description of the manuscript's provenance. The use is minimal and clearly justified by scholarly aims, falling squarely within the bounds of permitted academic reproduction.

It must also be emphasised that the image is not used in the same way by the blog and by the claimant's publication. While the blog employs the image within a non-peer-reviewed, commercially-oriented context, the claimant's work embeds the material into a rigorously documented research publication, complete with textual transcriptions and extensive philological analysis.

Copyright and Reproduction of Historical Miniatures

Finally, it should be underscored that the reproduction of historical miniatures—such as those appearing in illuminated manuscripts or auction catalogues—cannot be protected under modern copyright frameworks when

the reproduction lacks originality or creative input. The photographs in question serve purely documentary functions and do not meet the threshold for originality required for copyright protection.

Even less plausible is the notion that such a photograph, when hosted on a personal blog, would confer exclusive rights to the blog author. Furthermore, the educational and scholarly nature of the claimant's publication, along with the demonstrable absence of commercial harm to any publisher or rights-holder (such as Sotheby's), reinforces the legitimacy of the use under academic standards and fair use provisions.

Allegation Concerning the Liturgical Use of the Manuscript

Among the allegations made against Prof. Rossi was the claim that she had committed plagiarism in her identification of the liturgical use of a Book of Hours prior to its dismantlement. It must be emphasised that the manuscript in question no longer exists in its entirety, having been dismembered and dispersed through commercial channels. The claimant's scholarly work was based on a digital reconstruction of the manuscript, conducted through a combination of codicological evidence and archival research. By contrast, the blog

upon which the allegations were based makes no attempt at reconstructing the original structure or liturgical coherence of the codex. Its purpose appears rather to be the presentation and commercial display of individual illuminated folios.

Comparative Analysis

A direct comparison between the materials cited in the accusation reveals a substantial methodological difference. In particular, both the claimant and the blog refer to the rare text of the *Office of the Dead* ("Milicia est vita hominis") and, relying on the reference work of K. Ottosen, trace its occurrence to the liturgical usage of Châlons-en-Champagne. However, the blog stops at this brief attribution. Prof. Rossi, on the other hand, uses this same liturgical detail as a starting point for a broader reconstruction, identifying not only the regional liturgical usage, but also the likely production network of the manuscript and its earliest known owner, within the historical context of Champagne.

Such findings, which are the result of extended philological inquiry, are nowhere to be found in the blog. As such, the accusation of plagiarism cannot be substantiated in any way, since the two works differ both in method and in scope.

Reconstructing the De Roucy Hours: A Methodological Overview

The second chapter of *Isabelle Boursier's Book of Hours* opens with a case study on an illuminated manuscript datable to the 1480s, commissioned for Louis de Roucy, illegitimate son of the Marquis of Montmirail. This manuscript, now dismembered, belonged until the 18th century to the library of the Marquis of Montmirail-Courtanvaux (p. 28).

The investigation begins with a single digitised leaf bearing a miniature and Latin text, systematically identified as folio 64 through a methodological framework rooted in codicology and paleography (Fig. 1a). The reconstruction proceeds through the *recensio* phase—an analytical process designed to match isolated folios with their original codex by cross-referencing visual, material, and textual features (p. 29–30).

"By applying the reconstruction methodology beginning with this particular leaf, our objective is to determine which specific dismembered manuscript this segment potentially originated from" (p. 29).

This initial effort leads to the identification of a *Deposition* miniature leaf—catalogued and traced

through auction house archives—allowing Rossi to anchor the sequence and position of other folios (Fig. 2, p. 32). The *recensio* technique then guides the work through a comparative codicological study of the leaves' format (145×100 mm, 14 lines of text) and their textual incipit: "*Deus in adiutorium meum intende…*" (p. 31).

The Role of Auction Houses and the Dismemberment Trail

A critical moment arises as Rossi traces the provenance of the miniatures through Charles Edwin Puckett, whose site documents the Sotheby's sale of the full manuscript in June 1954. Notably, the codex had been described as intact and composed of 31 miniatures, bound with black Moroccan leather. The turning point comes in 2009, when the codex reappears at a Bloomsbury auction in New York. That sale marks the beginning of its dispersal (pp. 32–33).

"Though still intact when sold in 1954, the manuscript's dismemberment occurred shortly after its sale at a Bloomsbury auction in New York on April 3, 2009" (p. 33).

By examining online records and auction databases such as Invaluable.com and Rare Book Hub, Rossi identifies that German book dealer Kiefer had already begun offering separate folios from the manuscript by

September 2009—only five months after the 2009 Bloomsbury auction (Figs. 4–6, pp. 38–39). Fig. 7 clarifies that these leaves were not even sold, remaining on the market (p. 39).

A Transparent Timeline and Kidd's Involvement

The reconstructed timeline laid out in this chapter points directly to the commercial circulation of the leaves via Kiefer and other European dealers. The presence of multiple sales and re-sales is clearly documented. Particularly damning is the repeated listing of specific miniatures (e.g., Deposition, Evangelists, the Madonna) through German platforms as late as 2016.

Peter Kidd's involvement—although not directly named in this chapter—is unambiguously framed in Rossi's analysis of "freelance consultants and external partners" who operate alongside auction houses, assisting in the dismemberment and resale of manuscript leaves.

"I level similar charges of collusion against these collaborators and backstage players in the past... these consultants dismiss or even fabricate questionable provenance to enable manuscripts' mutilation" (p. 36).

This language leaves little room for ambiguity, especially when juxtaposed with the fact that Kidd himself featured and commented upon some of the same leaves through

his blog, while simultaneously engaging in reputational attacks against Rossi.

Liturgical Structure and Original Contextualisation

From p. 40 onwards, the chapter moves into a highly structured reconstruction of the Book of Hours' internal liturgical logic. This is where Rossi's expertise stands out: she defines, folio by folio, the prayers, pericopes, suffrages, and antiphons expected within each part of the book. Notably, she reconstructs the probable use of the codex in a Champagne or Roman liturgical context, citing the inclusion of rare Suffrages and local calendar variations.

This refutes entirely the idea that her research could have "borrowed" from Kidd's blog—especially since Kidd's listings lack both liturgical structure and codicological rationale, focusing instead on catalogue images and brief captions.

Conclusion and Relevance for the Legal Rebuttal

The analysis conducted in *Isabelle Boursier's Book of Hours* not only displays rigorous methodology but also predates any engagement with the blog in question. It includes original data (foliation, physical analysis, textual structure), cross-referenced sale records, and clearly

documented sources.

The accusations of plagiarism thus fall apart upon the mere confrontation of method and content: Rossi reconstructs an entire manuscript through paleographic, liturgical and auction-based evidence, while Kidd offers no more than casual blogging.

This chapter—and indeed, the entire monograph—serves as a scholarly refutation, exposing the very mechanisms of manuscript dismemberment, commercial interest, and the networked complicities that, ironically, are closely tied to those who later accused Rossi.

Further Allegations of Academic Misconduct

1. Reconstruction of Dismembered Manuscripts: Alleged Omission of Bibliographic Sources

Another claim advanced against Prof. Rossi was that she had failed to cite existing bibliographic sources concerning the reconstruction of dismembered manuscripts. This accusation is unfounded both from a legal and scholarly perspective. The reconstruction method developed by Prof. Rossi is widely recognised as an original contribution to the preservation of manuscript heritage. It is characterised by its rigour, coherence, and ability to reassemble scattered folios into a plausible and documented structure.

Far from omitting references, Rossi's research draws on standard methodologies of codicological analysis, while introducing a systematic and transparent digital apparatus, which is publicly accessible. Her reconstructions have been praised for their methodological clarity and for enabling public access to otherwise inaccessible material. To claim that such work constitutes a failure of scholarly diligence is, at best, misleading, and at worst, a deliberate misrepresentation.

The Allegation of "Self-Plagiarism": The Bronzino Case

Among the most paradoxical accusations directed at Prof. Carla Rossi was that of *self-plagiarism*—a concept that, while occasionally debated within academic publishing ethics, is often misunderstood and misapplied. The claim focused on her 2021 volume *Il Bronzino poeta. Rime serie e facete di un maestro del Rinascimento fiorentino*, which allegedly reproduced (without proper citation, it was said) ideas or textual formulations found in some of her earlier publications on the same subject.

This allegation would be humorous were it not for the gravity with which it was presented in an official context. It amounts, essentially, to accusing an author of having quoted herself without permission.

Contextual Clarification

The volume in question is the result of over twenty years of research on the poetic corpus of Agnolo Bronzino, the Florentine painter and court poet whose literary work had until recently remained marginalised within Renaissance studies. Rossi had previously published scholarly articles and editions on Bronzino's poetry between 2003 and 2020. The 2021 monograph represents the culmination of those efforts: a comprehensive, critical synthesis aimed at offering a new annotated edition of Bronzino's *Rime* along with an interpretative framework deeply grounded in prior investigations.

It is not only customary, but expected, in the humanities that scholars return to and refine their earlier work, especially when a substantial body of new material is integrated and the intended format is distinct—such as moving from article to monograph. In this specific case, Prof. Rossi's previous research constituted the foundation of her own expanded argument. The citations were present; the perspective had evolved; the scope had widened.

To label this process *self-plagiarism* is to suggest that scholars are prohibited from building upon their own ideas, unless they footnote themselves with the anxiety of

a defendant rather than the confidence of an expert. It is akin to accusing an architect of reusing a blueprint she herself designed, or a composer of quoting a previous motif without licensing it from herself.

Scholarly and Legal Considerations

From a legal standpoint, the concept of self-plagiarism remains largely undefined in international copyright law. Copyright infringement involves the unauthorised use of someone *else's* protected expression. When the material originates with the author, and especially when the reuse occurs within a coherent and cumulative research trajectory, the legal basis for such a claim evaporates.

From a scholarly perspective, the reuse or development of prior findings is not only legitimate but necessary to ensure continuity, coherence, and impact. It is standard practice in philological and historical disciplines to revisit hypotheses in light of new discoveries or formats. Prof. Rossi's 2021 monograph was neither a repetition nor a duplication: it was a scholarly deepening.

The accusation, therefore, reveals more about the accusers' confusion over academic practices than about any actual misconduct. Indeed, the irony lies in the fact that the Bronzino volume, precisely because it synthesises and expands prior insights, *demonstrates* the intellectual

consistency and authorial ownership that the notion of plagiarism is meant to safeguard.

Allegations Regarding the Volume On the Italian–Swiss Border 1943–45. The Uncertain Fate of Several Jewish Refugees

The third accusation directed at Prof. Rossi concerned her monograph on the fate of Jewish refugees in the border regions between Italy and Switzerland during the final years of the Second World War. The expertise commissioned to challenge this work focused on the volume *Sul confine italo-svizzero 1943–45. Il labile destino di alcuni profughi ebrei*, published in 2023 with a registered DOI: 10.55456/sulconfine.

Unlike the prior cases, this set of allegations was entirely constructed upon the assertions of Dutch journalist Peter Burger, whose professional history includes repeated attacks on Prof. Rossi and who has demonstrated a clear animus in multiple press interventions and posts on X (formerly Twitter). The nature and tone of Burger's communications—frequently oscillating between the polemical and the defamatory—cast serious doubt on the objectivity and legitimacy of his role as a neutral observer. It is no coincidence that Burger is the same journalist who published or supported multiple articles

seeking to delegitimise the RECEPTIO centre, often without presenting concrete evidence or following standard journalistic protocols.

Selective and Misleading Use of Plagiarism Software

The central claim made in relation to *Sul confine italo-svizzero 1943–45* rested on supposed "matches" identified by an unspecified anti-plagiarism software. These tools, while potentially useful as preliminary screening instruments, are wholly inappropriate for legal or scholarly determinations in the humanities. Their reliance on algorithmic similarity rather than contextual or interpretative nuance is particularly ill-suited to works dealing with historical analysis or archival synthesis.

In one striking instance, the software reportedly flagged Rossi's correct citation of the Swiss portal *dodis.ch*—a primary archival source on Swiss diplomatic history—as "unattributed material", despite the fact that the references had been clearly footnoted in the printed text. The apparent inability of the software to distinguish between appropriately cited documentation and actual copying renders the entire procedure epistemologically flawed.

As the legal opinion accompanying the defence (submitted to the Federal Administrative Court of St.

Gallen) astutely observed, the use of such detection systems without human verification or contextual interpretation is not only methodologically defective, but potentially defamatory if invoked to support public accusations.

Paraphrased Materials and Archival Description

Several additional accusations targeted passages of the book that paraphrase or discuss archival documents, particularly lists of names, border transit records, and biographical notes on refugees. These, however, are not creative texts susceptible to copyright protection, but rather factual data retrieved from public registries and institutional archives.

Moreover, in accordance with standard historical methodology, Prof. Rossi did not reproduce these sources verbatim but integrated them into a broader historical and sociological interpretation. Her work aimed to reconstruct the ethical ambiguities of Swiss border policy in 1943–45 through detailed case studies—a goal that no superficial software or cursory reading by a journalist can credibly invalidate.

Ideological Motivation and Defamatory Intent

Given Burger's track record of antagonistic publications

and social media activity targeting Prof. Rossi, the legitimacy of his "findings" must be called into question. His commentary is devoid of academic framing, lacks independent peer verification, and has consistently aimed at fuelling public suspicion rather than engaging in scholarly debate.

To summarise, the accusations concerning this volume do not withstand academic or legal scrutiny. They rest on unreliable technical tools, fail to demonstrate intent or substantial similarity, and arise from a demonstrably hostile source. In light of the wider defamatory campaign orchestrated from late 2022 onwards, the allegations appear less a response to scholarly impropriety than an attempt to inflict reputational harm on a scholar who had dared to challenge powerful economic and academic interests.

Summary-Based Attribution and the Academic Use of Historical Sources

It is a long-established convention in historical scholarship to summarise the findings of earlier studies, presenting the conclusions of other scholars in clear, concise form without necessarily reproducing extensive textual quotations. Provided that appropriate footnotes or references are included—an academic practice the

Claimant consistently followed—this method of synthesis does not in any way constitute plagiarism. It is, in fact, a recognised and widely accepted scholarly technique for presenting research in an accessible and rigorous form.

The failure of the accusations to recognise this standard practice raises serious questions regarding the validity of the underlying assessment tools, particularly given that the so-called plagiarism detection software cited by the opposing party did not appear capable of distinguishing between acknowledged summary and actual misappropriation.

Description of Widely Known Historical Facts

Furthermore, the volume in question presents a series of historically established events—facts which are part of the public domain and are not, by their nature, eligible for copyright protection. Descriptions of such events do not constitute any form of infringement, and Prof. Rossi's consistent attribution of these facts to appropriate primary and secondary sources demonstrates her adherence to academic standards. The failure of the opposing party to take this into account, and to rely instead on an automatic detection tool unable to assess scholarly conventions, severely undermines the

credibility of their claims.

On the Alleged Omission of the Bergier Commission

A further claim advanced by the opposing party was that the Claimant failed to cite the findings of the Bergier Commission. This, too, is demonstrably false. The report of the Commission is explicitly cited multiple times in the volume, including in the preface and in notes on pages 13, 37, and 87. A typographical oversight in one of these citations has no bearing on the substance or intent of the reference, and does not, by any scholarly standard, support an accusation of plagiarism.

Misattributed Paraphrasing and Secondary Source Overlap

An additional allegation concerns similarities between passages found on pages 25–26 of Rossi's volume and an online article by Ada Treves. However, a substantive comparison reveals that Rossi's analysis is based not on Treves's work but on the book *A un passo dalla salvezza* by Silvana Calvo, which is explicitly cited as the primary source in note 1 on page 7 and elsewhere. Rossi relied on the printed edition of Calvo's book—not the online review—and any similarity stems from the fact that both

authors refer to the same source.

The so-called software tool used by Peter Burger in support of his claims was unable to detect non-digitised sources such as Calvo's book, resulting in erroneous conclusions. Burger's failure to undertake manual verification of these alleged overlaps, and his decision to base serious accusations on a fallible and unsupervised digital tool, demonstrates a critical methodological flaw.

Direct Contributions and Documentary Cooperation

Prof. Rossi received original documents, photographs, and other materials directly from Dr Tiziana Mona, a formal collaborator on the volume, as well as from the Latis family. The latter addressed an open letter to the accusing party, thanking Rossi and explicitly affirming their cooperation, which allowed the reconstruction of Liliana Latis's personal story. Any accusation of plagiarism in this regard is thus not only unsubstantiated but has already been explicitly refuted by the original informants themselves. The opposing party's failure to acknowledge or even reference this publicly available documentation is both surprising and indicative of a prejudicial stance.

Final Considerations

The plagiarism accusations directed at Prof. Rossi are based on a fragmentary and internally inconsistent body of "evidence" consisting largely of blog entries and opaque software reports, both of which are unreliable and easily disprovable. The mechanical and sometimes arbitrary nature of the assessment, coupled with a demonstrable lack of understanding of academic conventions and citation standards, undermines the credibility of the allegations in their entirety.

In every instance, the Claimant provided clear and verifiable documentation in support of her work. Archival sources, academic literature, and public documents were duly cited, eliminating the basis for any plausible accusation of intellectual misappropriation. No meaningful evidence has been submitted in support of the so-called self-plagiarism charge.

Whatever subjective opinions may be held about Prof. Rossi's work—and it is worth recalling that she has been widely recognised for her scholarly contributions for decades—the transparency, rigour, and originality of her research are manifest. It is this, and not the shifting opinions of online commentators or non-peer-reviewed articles, that ought to form the basis of any serious

academic or legal evaluation.

Chapter 3

Distortion, Insinuation, and the Manufacturing of Doubt

The campaign against Prof. Carla Rossi and RECEPTIO did not arise in a vacuum. It followed a precise, almost textbook strategy of manufacturing doubt—one often observed when powerful interests are challenged by independent scholarly investigations. As documented across four major volumes authored by Rossi between 2023 and 2025—*Isabelle Boursier's Book of Hours: A Dismembered Manuscript from Mary Benson's Collection* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2024), *Digital Reconstruction of a Dismembered Book of Hours Illuminated by Robert Boyvin* (CSP, 2024), *The 1879 Theft of Royal Ms 16 e viii* (CSP, 2025), and *Beyond the Margins: Female Illuminators in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Ethics International Press, 2025)—several individuals and entities involved in the public smear campaign have been shown to have longstanding ties to the commercial networks Rossi exposed.

This includes not only direct participants in the manuscript trade but also individuals acting under the guise of scholarship while facilitating or legitimising the

illicit circulation of dismembered folios. Many of the most vocal detractors—whether bloggers, unaffiliated researchers, or retired academics—were shown, through Rossi's meticulous documentation, to be directly or indirectly benefiting from the same market practices her work had called into question.

The mechanism was consistent: through insinuation, selective quotation, and strategically decontextualised information, Rossi's academic reputation was targeted in a way that mirrored disinformation tactics long studied in the sociology of knowledge. The method relied not on scholarly refutation or structured critique, but on insinuation and the calculated erosion of trust—most often via platforms devoid of peer review or accountability.

The accusations ranged from the absurd to the defamatory: questioning the existence of RECEPTIO's library (documented in dozens of photographs and physical testimonies), denying the existence of its legal counsel (despite public records and videos of Prof. Bernasconi's interventions), and ultimately alleging misconduct, plagiarism, and fictitious academic credentials. None of these claims withstood scrutiny. Yet their repetition across loosely connected blogs, social media, and even institutional mailing lists contributed to

an environment in which suspicion could thrive without evidence.

The scholarly response to such a campaign cannot rely on the same tools as those used to discredit it. As the following sections will argue, resisting distortion requires structural reflection on the dynamics of academic complicity, institutional inertia, and the necessity of building public, documented archives of resistance.

Academic Solidarity and Public Support

In the face of the defamatory campaign targeting Prof. Carla Rossi—a campaign marked by anonymous emails, falsified obituaries, manipulated Wikipedia entries, and explicit death threats—numerous scholars from across Europe and beyond have taken a principled and public stance in her defence. Their statements, letters, and recorded interventions stand as a collective reaffirmation of academic ethics, transparency, and solidarity in the face of reputational violence.

Among the first to intervene was **Prof. Carlo Chiurco**, Associate Professor of Ethics and Social and Political Philosophy at the University of Verona, who published a video in English unequivocally condemning the non-academic methods used to target Prof. Rossi. In his

statement, available at www.oprom.eu/statement, Prof. Chiurco stressed that any critique of scholarly work must take place within the legitimate frameworks of academia—namely, peer-reviewed journals and recognised scientific venues—not through smear campaigns or anonymous defamation.

Also among the earliest and most vocal supporters were the philologist **Prof. Michel Zink**, Collège de France; **Prof. Romeo Bufalo**, Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Calabria, and **Prof. Antoni Rossell**, Romance philologist and musicologist at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, who publicly endorsed Prof. Rossi's academic integrity and denounced the attacks she endured.

In parallel, several internationally respected scholars addressed open letters to institutions that had received defamatory communications against Prof. Rossi, defending her person and her work's scientific value. These included:

- **Prof. Philippe Guérin** (Sorbonne), whose letter is publicly available on the OProM website
- **Prof. Furio Brugnolo** (University of Padua)
- **Prof. Alfonso D'Agostino** (University of Milan)
- **Prof. Franco De Vivo** (University of Rome "Tor Vergata")

- **Prof. Martin D. Glessgen** (University of Zurich – Romanisches Seminar)
- **Prof. Saverio Guida** (University of Messina)
- **Prof. Giorgio Inglese** (Sapienza University of Rome)
- **Prof. Patrick Labarthe** (Emeritus, University of Zurich – Romanisches Seminar)
- **Prof. Lucia Lazzerini** (University of Florence)
- **Prof. Raffaele Pinto** (University of Barcelona)
- **Prof. Lucinia Speciale** (University of Salento)
- **Prof. Agostino Ziino** (University of Rome "Tor Vergata")

As the situation continued to unfold, further scholars and cultural figures joined in support, including:

- **Prof. Malinka Velinova**, Romance philologist at the University of Sofia
- **Prof. Leena Löfstedt**, a widely respected Romance philologist who collaborated for years with Prof. Rossi and is now emerita at UCLA and the University of Helsinki
- **Dr Paolo Spaggiari**,
- **Prof. Franco Langher,** former Anti-Mafia Prosecutor at the Public Prosecutor's Office of Messina and Professor of Economic Law
- **Dr Maria Giovanna Fadiga**, associated with the

Imago publishing house (Rimini)

- **Prof. Cinzia Pignatelli** (University of Poitiers)
- and **Prof. Martin Aurell**, a pre-eminent medieval historian at the University of Poitiers and fellow of the Institut Universitaire de France.

In a particularly revealing episode, Peter Kidd himself contacted Prof. Aurell by email, insinuating that his support for Prof. Rossi was based on a "special personal relationship" rather than on scholarly respect. Prof. Aurell responded with the firmness and civility that have always characterised his academic conduct. Just days after this exchange, Prof. Aurell received anonymous threats, as documented on the dedicated page of the OProM website:

📎 https://www.oprom.eu/m%C3%A9faitscontreloprom

This wide-ranging and explicit academic support has not only restored public clarity around Prof. Rossi's profile and research but also highlighted the need for institutions to adopt mechanisms that protect scholars from orchestrated smear campaigns, especially when such campaigns are rooted in conflicts of interest involving the antiquarian trade of dismembered manuscripts.

The **Organisation pour la Protection des Manuscrits**

Médiévaux (OProM) continues to maintain an updated public record of all statements of support, letters, and audiovisual testimonies at:

https://www.oprom.eu/statement

Conclusion: ReceptioGate, Institutional Failure, and the Questions That Remain

The documentary record, the judicial findings, and the chronology reconstructed throughout this volume compel a fundamental reassessment of the public narrative surrounding ReceptioGate.

For more than four years, public attention was directed almost exclusively towards allegations of plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and academic misconduct. Journalists, bloggers, university administrators, and funding agencies devoted considerable effort to examining accusations directed against a scholar whose research focused on manuscript provenance, manuscript dismemberment, and the circulation of detached medieval leaves on the antiquarian market.

Yet one question was rarely asked.

Why did Peter Kidd devote so much time and energy to attacking Professor Carla Rossi?

The campaign directed against Rossi extended far beyond ordinary academic criticism. It did not merely challenge scholarly interpretations or citation practices. It progressively sought to undermine the legitimacy of the researcher, her collaborators, her institutions, and ultimately anyone who attempted to document or

investigate the affair.

RECEPTIO was repeatedly described as a fictitious institution populated by non-existent or deceased individuals despite its documented activities, publications, conferences, research projects, and legal existence. Paolo Bernasconi, the distinguished Swiss jurist who advised the foundation, was presented as a fabricated figure. Professor Antoni Rossell, a recognised specialist in medieval literature and one of RECEPTIO's collaborators, was described as the identity of a deceased academic allegedly appropriated for fraudulent purposes. Following the publication of the first investigative findings presented in this volume, even the identity of Jordi Puig, the independent researcher and author of this investigation, was publicly questioned. The campaign no longer targeted only Rossi and RECEPTIO; it extended to those who attempted to document the evidence and reconstruct the chronology of events.

The significance of these allegations lies not in their credibility, which could be tested against publicly available evidence, but in the fact that they were circulated, repeated, and accepted by individuals and institutions that showed little interest in verifying them.

This raises a second question.

How did accusations originating largely from blogs,

anonymous communications, and online campaigns acquire such institutional influence?

The most troubling aspect of ReceptioGate is not the existence of a defamatory campaign. Academic history contains many examples of personal hostility, professional rivalry, and organised attempts at reputational damage. What distinguishes this case is the willingness of respected institutions to treat unverified allegations as credible while showing comparatively little interest in examining the underlying issues of manuscript provenance and cultural heritage protection.

The University of Zurich and the Swiss National Science Foundation relied upon accusations that were subsequently subjected to judicial scrutiny. On 7 January 2026, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court annulled the SNSF decision that had sought to recover research funding connected with the *Louis de Roucy* project. The judgment represented a decisive turning point in the affair and substantially altered the public narrative that had been constructed around the case.

The chronology reconstructed in this volume reveals another striking fact.

The attacks intensified after Rossi's investigations into manuscript dismemberment and after the submission of documentation to the Italian authorities concerning the

circulation of detached manuscript leaves originating from public collections. Among the cases later examined in greater detail was Turin MS E.V.5, a manuscript preserved in the Biblioteca Universitaria di Torino. Three illuminated folios had been removed from the codex in 1979, appeared on the international market decades later, and were eventually recovered by the Italian Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale.

The significance of this case extends beyond the recovery of three leaves.

The same Sotheby's sale held in London on 7 July 2015 that included leaves from the manuscript later reconstructed as *The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy* also included the three folios removed from Turin MS E.V.5. Peter Kidd was involved in the catalogue descriptions associated with that sale. In subsequent years, one manuscript became the object of Rossi's reconstruction and the target of plagiarism allegations; the other became the subject of a cultural-heritage investigation culminating in the recovery of stolen material.

These parallel histories do not by themselves explain the origins of ReceptioGate. They do, however, illuminate the environment in which the controversy emerged and the interests that may have been affected by research into manuscript provenance, manuscript dismemberment,

and the circulation of detached leaves.

Ultimately, this book does not claim to answer every question.

It demonstrates that many of the assumptions presented as established facts during the controversy were either exaggerated, unsupported, or contradicted by subsequent developments. It documents how a campaign initially framed as a dispute over academic integrity gradually evolved into an attempt to delegitimise institutions, collaborators, legal advisers, and researchers. It shows how allegations were amplified while evidence concerning manuscript provenance received comparatively little attention.

Most importantly, it restores to the historical record a question that should have been asked from the beginning.

Why was so much effort devoted to discrediting the scholar who documented the dismantling and dispersal of medieval manuscripts, while so little attention was paid to the manuscripts themselves?

Why did journalists spend years investigating accusations of plagiarism while largely ignoring the provenance of leaves removed from medieval manuscripts, sold through the international antiquarian market, and in some cases subsequently recovered by cultural-heritage authorities?

The same 2015 Sotheby's sale connected the future controversy surrounding *The Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy* and the later investigation into the stolen folios of Turin MS E.V.5. Peter Kidd stands at the intersection of both stories.

The answer to that coincidence has never been adequately explored.

What this investigation has demonstrated is that ReceptioGate was never primarily a story about plagiarism, academic integrity, or scholarly misconduct. It was the transformation of a provenance dispute into a reputational weapon. The real scandal was not the research conducted by RECEPTIO, but the coordinated effort to discredit that research and those who produced it.

The manuscripts were real. The stolen leaves were real. The Sotheby's sales were real. The provenance questions were real. The judicial proceedings were real. The recovery of cultural property by the Italian authorities was real.

What ultimately collapsed under scrutiny was the narrative constructed to portray RECEPTIO and its researchers as frauds.

The historical record now speaks for itself.

For more than four years, the public narrative surrounding ReceptioGate focused on allegations of plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and academic misconduct. Journalists, bloggers, and institutions repeated accusations directed against Professor Carla Rossi and the research centre RECEPTIO. Yet remarkably little attention was paid to the subject of Rossi's research itself: the dismantling of medieval manuscripts and the circulation of stolen manuscript leaves on the international antiquarian market.

Drawing upon judicial decisions, archival records, auction catalogues, institutional documents, correspondence, and previously unpublished evidence, Jordi Puig reconstructs the chronology of one of the most controversial academic affairs of recent years.

At the centre of the investigation stand two manuscripts: the Book of Hours of Louis de Roucy, digitally reconstructed after centuries of dispersal, and Turin MS E.V.5, a manuscript preserved in the Biblioteca Universitaria di Torino from which three illuminated folios were removed and later sold on the international market. Both appeared in the same Sotheby's sale in London on 7 July 2015, and both would later become linked to the events that shaped ReceptioGate.

The book examines manuscript provenance, cultural-heritage protection, academic politics, institutional decision-making, and the economic interests surrounding the trade in dismembered manuscripts.

ReceptioGate entered public debate as an alleged plagiarism scandal. The evidence assembled in this investigation suggests a far more complex reality, one in which provenance research, cultural heritage, and the international circulation of stolen manuscript leaves occupy a central place.

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